

RETIRING
FORCE QB
SAMI
GRISAFE:
CHICAGO'S
TOP LGBT
SPORTS STORY
OF 2014

PAGE 22



WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN,
BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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**QUIGLEY,
OTHERS DECRY
BLOOD-POLICY
SUGGESTIONS**

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Marriage tops 2014 local news

COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

Marriage still dominated the LGBT headlines in Illinois for much of 2014, as many state residents were able to marry ahead of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Equality Act taking effect, thanks to a lawsuit victory.

Many gay-rights activists campaigned on behalf of Gov. Pat Quinn, maintaining that challenger Bruce Rauner would be detrimental to advances made by the state's LGBT residents. Rauner nevertheless won the general election in November.

Some community members turned their attention to LGBT homeless youth, who were the focus of an advocacy summit in May. Transgender persons were also the focus of much work, as their issues enjoyed slightly higher visibility in mainstream media. Much work remained to be done with their issues, however, as 2014 drew to a close.

Here are some local stories that made headlines this past year:

—**Marriage comes early:** Forty-six LGBT couples rushed to Cook County Clerk David Orr's office Feb. 21 to get the first marriage licenses after a federal judge ruled earlier that day that same-sex couples would not have to wait until June 1 to be married. Judge Sharon Coleman's ruling said the state's ban on gay marriages was unconstitutional, and that marriages for gay couples could begin immediately. Same-sex couples who had already



Charles Gurion and David Wilk, the first gay couple to obtain a marriage license in Cook County after a judge ruled that gay marriages could begin for all Cook County couples. Photo by Matt Simonette

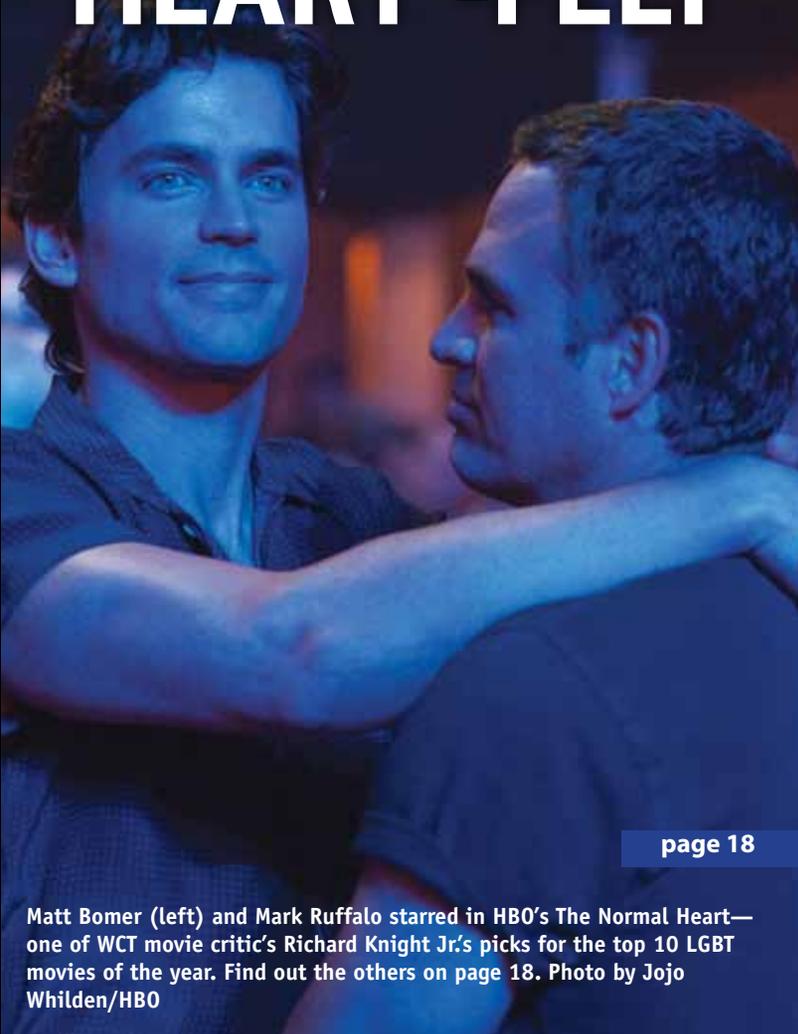
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**UGANDA'S YOWERI
MUSEVENI: PART
OF WORLD LGBT
NEWS IN 2014**

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'HEART'-FELT



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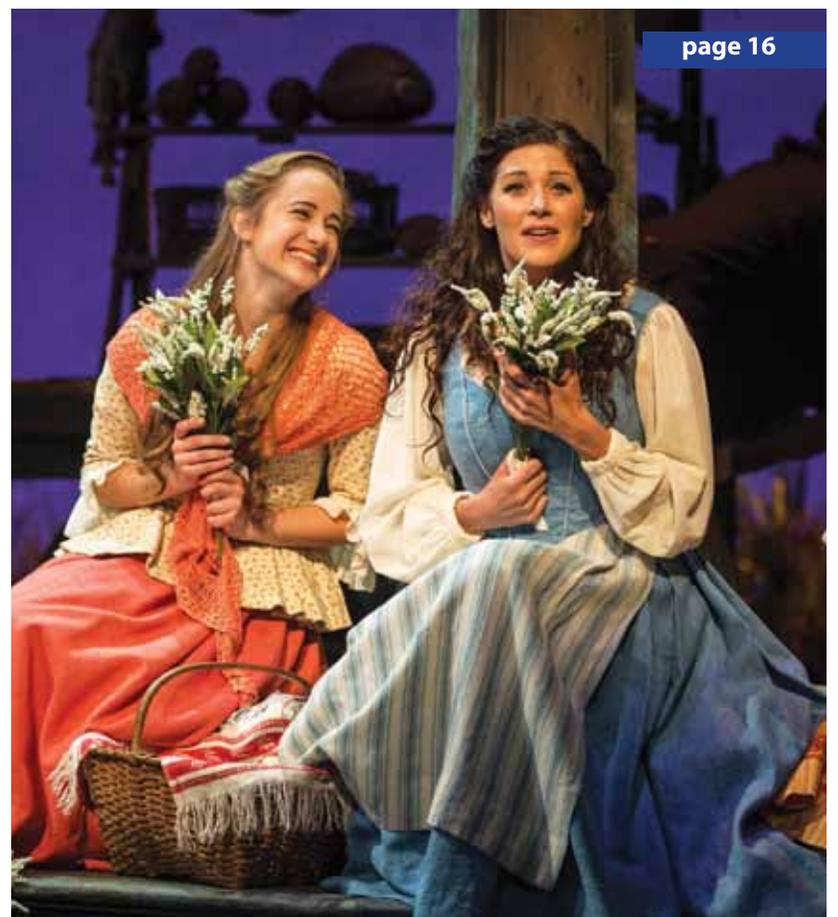
Matt Bomer (left) and Mark Ruffalo starred in HBO's *The Normal Heart*—one of WCT movie critic's Richard Knight Jr.'s picks for the top 10 LGBT movies of the year. Find out the others on page 18. Photo by Jojo Whilden/HBO



**2014 LOCAL
CONCERT SCENE
INCLUDES LADY
GAGA**

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GREAT SCOT



page 16

Brigadoon, set in Scotland, was one of the highlights of the local theater scene in 2014. Read about more ups and downs on pages 16-17. Photo by Liz Lauren



A BENEFIT FOR Apartment Adoption Project

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this week in
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Images on cover (left, from top): Photo of Sami Grisafe courtesy of the Chicago Force; photo of U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley by Jamie Anne Royce; photo of Yoweri Museveni from Museveni's official website; photo of Lady Gaga by Jerry Nunn

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THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

On left: Key West, Florida, has a lot to offer, including sun, sand—and sizzling gay men and lesbians.
Photo by Matt Simonette



Director Daniel Ribiero talks about his movie *The Way He Looks*, which is about teens who form an intimate bond.



Frank McAlpin writes about why he thinks Laverne Cox (above) should be a permanent co-host of *The View*.
Photo by Melissa Hamburg

MASTERS-FUL

Billy Masters' column has some interesting items about celebrities.

SEASON'S READINGS

WCT's choices for the books of the year have been unveiled.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Find out the latest about Sandra Bernhard, Bruce Vilanch and Janet Jackson.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

nightspots
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a best-of jam
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TRANSPOLITAN
transgender resilience

OUT AT CHM
ChicagoHistoryMuseum

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The Chicago History Museum gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the people of Chicago.

Detroit LGBTQs mourn passing of transgender man

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL BLICKENSERFER

The body of 22-year-old Michigan transgender man Jay Ralko—who had been missing for 13 days—was discovered Dec. 23 in Warren, Michigan. A statement released from Equality Michigan the following day noted that police believe the cause of death to be suicide, pending the results of an autopsy.

Ralko's best friend of five years and college roommate Ashton Niedzwiecki described him to Windy City Times as "the kind of guy who you couldn't help but love as soon as you met him and he loved everyone he met. Even if you fell out of contact with him for a while, he was always thinking about you and was really excited whenever he did hear from you," Niedzwiecki said.

They met at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allies (GLBTA) Student Union at Wayne State University in Detroit. "We'd go out and grab dinner," he said. "We just clicked



Jay Ralko. Photo courtesy of Ashton Niedzwiecki

right away. After a few months, we got an apartment and a dog together. He was like my baby brother. We told each other everything."

Niedzwiecki added that they transitioned together and so celebrated each step they took. "We were singing a song a few years back and making fun of it and Jay's voice cracked," he said. "We both got really excited and he kept singing it over and over again, just to hear it crack because he was so happy. He had the best sense of humor. People wanted to be around him because he was always laughing and cracking jokes."

Meanwhile, Niedzwiecki said that Ralko was active in the community, volunteering at a Detroit homeless shelter for LGBT youth. He also took part in the founding of FTM Detroit which, according to its Facebook page is "a community-based group made by and for transmasculine identified people in the greater Detroit area" that seeks to "strengthen ties among transmasculine identified people in the area through social gatherings, discussion and support groups, and activism projects."

"Jay never wanted anyone to feel left out," Niedzwiecki recalled. "If there was anyone who did feel [that way] he would always be the one who would reach out to that person and make them feel like he was his world. It was his superpower. He could make anyone feel like they were the most important person in the room."

A statement from Ralko's family released by Equality Michigan read "If we could have one last word with Jay, we would tell him how proud we are of him. Not many people would be able to get through what he has. He has struggled with so much in the last few years, much of which none of us will ever understand. Our only wish now is that all the pain has gone away and he has found peace. We love you Jay and we will miss you."

In the same release, Victim Advocate for Equality Michigan Leah Taraskiewicz stated "The Equality Michigan team is heartbroken over the loss of Jay, and we will continue to work with the family to support them in any way we can. We don't know if Jay's mental health played a role in this tragedy. However, we do know that, LGBTQ people are at higher risk of facing tough mental health situations. No one should have to go through that alone. We encourage anyone who is struggling with mental illness and depression to seek help and support. We ask that everyone join us in keeping Jay's family and friends in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

"He was the most loyal and kindest friend that anyone could wish for," Niedzwiecki said. "He was my best friend and my baby brother. I will never stop missing him."

There will be a showing on December 29 at the LJ Griffin Funeral Home located at 8809 Wayne Road in Livonia, Michigan. Ralko's funeral was held at Saint Sabina Catholic Church 25555 Ann Arbor Trail, Dearborn Heights, Michigan on Dec. 30.

According to Niedzwiecki, in lieu of flowers people can send donations to the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park, Michigan or Affirmations in Ferndale, Michigan. Niedzwiecki is also organizing a memorial service, date and time to be announced.

For more information about FTM Detroit, please visit: https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/info?tab=page_info.

For Affirmations, please visit: <http://www.goaffirmations.org/>.

For the Ruth Ellis Center, please visit: <http://www.ruthelliscenter.org/>.

The United States has suspended Gambia's eligibility for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA).

"This decision is an important first step in sending a clear signal to President Yahya Jammeh and his associates about their human rights record, and they cannot be allowed to trample on the rights of LGBT Gambians," said Jean Freedberg, deputy director of HRC Global. "The United States government should not move forward with business as usual with The Gambia when LGBT people are harassed, imprisoned, tortured or even killed because of who they are."

Gambia arrests men for 'homosexual acts'

Gambian authorities arrested three men and accused them of committing homosexual acts, which are punishable with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment under a law signed in October, according to Yahoo! News UK.

The arrests followed a security operation and the men have confessed that they are gay; their nationalities are not named.

In a post-event release, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has commended the Obama Administration for taking concrete action against the Gambian government.

Writing For Justice

BY CAROLINE SIEDE



How to be a better ally (from someone who is still learning)

The recent wave of national "Black Lives Matter" protests has reignited a much-needed conversation about allyship.

In the world of social justice, an ally is a member of a dominant group who stands in support of a marginalized group. That can include white people fighting against racial profiling, straight people supporting gay marriage, men taking up feminist causes, cis people campaigning for trans rights, and nondisabled people striving to make the world a more welcoming place for those with disabilities.

Yet figuring out the right way to ally can be a difficult and awkward process. It's one I think about a lot, both as a white, straight person fighting for racial and LGBT equality, and as a woman seeking help from male feminists. With the caveat that I'm still learning, and probably always will be, here are five steps to becoming a better ally.

1.) Listen: This can be a tricky skill

"Allyship is not just about support, but also about action. It's crucial that allies get actively involved because their presence sends a signal that these are not one-group issues."

to learn. It's human nature to form an opinion and to share it. But just as you wouldn't stand up in the middle of a lecture on astrophysics to share your thoughts on the topic, you shouldn't rush to comment on the lived-experiences of others. Instead, seek out diverse voices—both in person and online—and listen with an open mind to what they have to say. When you hear that Black people from all walks of life have similar stories of police harassment, it's easy to see this as a larger systemic issue. Social media platforms like Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook allow users to curate the voices they read each day; the more diverse that stream of voices, the better.

2.) Develop empathy: Unlike sympathy, which is sorrow for someone else's troubles, empathy is a genuine understanding of someone else's feelings. It's important that allies do the mental work to imagine walking in a set of less-privileged shoes. That may not come naturally, as we're socialized to align with those who are similar to us. Thankfully, listening (i.e. step No. 1) is the best way to cultivate empathy. Remind yourself

that injustices against one group are injustices against humanity as a whole.

3.) Get the vocabulary: Social justice activists have dedicated their lives to writing, speaking, and campaigning for equality. Along the way they've established a specific set of vocabulary. So while in a general sense the word "privilege" might have connotations of wealth or luxury, in a social justice context it refers to a societal structure that gives subtle benefits to people of the dominate gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. Rather than expect activists to explain this vocabulary each time they use it, allies should dedicate time to brushing up on the basics. Once again, the Internet is the ideal place to start this research.

4.) Relearn history: And brushing up on the basics applies not just to vocabulary but to history as well. Our mainstream history centers first and foremost on straight, white men with only

a few women, people of color, and LGBT figures making it into the history books. School children will likely learn about the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic but not the AIDS crisis and subsequent activism of the 1980s. Even worse, the history of marginalized peoples is often glossed over, sugarcoated, or streamlined. While Martin Luther King Jr. is held up as a beacon of in-

terracial cooperation, in his seminal essay, Letter from a Birmingham Jail, he names passive white moderates as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to racial equality. A strong understanding of the history of the fight against oppression is vital to understanding the methods and goals of contemporary activism. Let go of your preconceived notions about history and think of your mind as a blank slate ready to be re-educated.

5.) Get involved but don't make it about you: This may be the most important and most difficult step. Allyship is not just about support, but also about action. It's crucial that allies get actively involved because their presence sends a signal that these are not one-group issues. From voting in an election to voting with your dollars, from attending a town hall meeting to attending a protest, that support can be expressed in a whole bunch of different ways. However, it's important that allies realize their goal is to lift up marginalized voices, not to usurp them. Don't think of yourself as the one giving the speech, but as the microphone that amplifies the speaker's voice.

Caroline Siede is a freelance writer living in Chicago where the cold never bothers her anyway. You can also find her work on The A.V. Club and Boing Boing.

Think tank releases report of finances of LGBT-advocacy groups

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

This December, the Colorado-based independent think tank Movement Advancement Project (MAP) released the 2014 National LGBT Movement Report, a comprehensive overview of the financial health of almost forty leading LGBT social justice organizations.

These organizations ranged from legal advocacy (e.g., Lambda Legal Defense), broad LGBT advocacy (e.g., HRC), research and public education (e.g., Funders for LGBTQ Issues), and issue-specific advocacy (e.g., Freedom to Marry), and represent "61 percent of the budgets of all LGBT social-justice organizations." (Note: The source here and forward is the MAP's National LGBT Movement Report.)

The yearly report was created to educate donors and advocates on organizations at the forefront of the LGBT movement and was funded by organizations such as the Ford Foundation, David Geffen Foundation, and the Palette Fund. LGBT community centers, arts and culture organizations, social and recreational organizations, and health and human services providers were excluded from the report.

The participating organizations were chosen based on factors such as size and relevancy within the total LGBT movement, with almost 84 percent of those participating having a budget over \$1 million. Of those with smaller budgets, the chosen organizations had the criteria of being national and "working in areas of critical concern to the LGBT movement." For a complete list of the organizations included in the report, see attached image titled, "Table 1: Participating Organizations by Category."

The organizations in the report "employed a total of 836 full-time and 141 part-time staff." In terms of diversity of board members and staff, the profiled LGBT advocacy organizations were slightly below tracking against U.S. population percentages in terms race and gender. "Compared to 37.4 percent of the U.S. population identifying as people of color, 34 percent of paid staff at participating organizations identify as people of color. Among senior staff, the percentage dropped to 27 percent" (see Figure 20).

Forty-seven percent of staff identified as women (vs. 51 percent of the U.S. population, according to the 2012 census). Twelve percent of paid staff identified as transgender, although it should be taken into consideration that transgender status is noted as separate than gender identity in this report and that "most will also identify as male, female, or genderqueer." Of the 33 non-transgender-specific organizations that reported this data, nine reported that over 10 percent of their staff identify as transgender.

Almost 60 percent of staff was between the ages of 30 and 54, with 32 percent under 30 and less than 10 percent in the age range of 55 and older. For the sake of comparison, the current U.S. workforce has a little over 12 percent of the population as 55+ in age.

In addition to staff breakdowns, the report compared indicators of financial health, such as an organization's liquidity ratio, and assets and liabilities. The recession of 2007 to 2008 saw a decrease in revenue but, "as a group, participating organizations reported increased revenue in 2013, marking the third year of growth," and totaling \$209.5 million.

Of the total revenue for the participating organizations, funding from the government only accounted for 3 percent in 2013. The lion's

Advocacy	Basic Rights Oregon Empire State Pride Agenda Equality California Equality Federation Equality Florida Equality Maine Family Equality Council Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Leadership Institute Human Rights Campaign and Foundation (HRC) Keshet Log Cabin Republicans MassEquality National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) PFLAG National (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) The Task Force
Issue	CenterLink Freedom to Marry GLAAD Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA) Immigration Equality New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project Out & Equal Workplace Advocates Point Foundation Reconciling Ministries Network Soulforce The Trevor Project
Legal	ACLU LGBT & AIDS Project Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) Lambda Legal Defense National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) Transgender Law Center (TLC)
Research & Public Education	Funders for LGBTQ Issues

Groups that participated in the 2014 National LGBT Movement Report.

share of revenue came from individual contributions at 37 percent: a total of 309,097 individual donors gave \$35 or more, a 6 percent increase over the year before; and donors who gave "\$25,000 or more increased 18 percent from 2012 to 2013." Revenue also came from a plethora of other sources, ranging from merchandise to corporate contributions to fund-raising events.

On average, participating organizations spent 12 cents to raise each dollar, a relatively constant ratio for about five years. Of total expenses, "81 percent were dedicated to programs and services and 10 percent to fundraising." Nine percent of expenses went towards management and general expenditures.

All but two organizations exceed the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance Benchmarks, minus the one that preferred not to be listed by name in the overall study. The benchmarks include set standards for board oversight and compensation, effectiveness, budget allocation, expense reporting, accuracy in organization materials, and cause marketing disclosures. Board and staff conflicts of interest, how complaints are handled and donor privacy measures are also examined.

Within the report, a standalone ten-year review was compiled for the 22 organizations that have consistently participated in the survey from 2004 to 2013, such as the Log Cabin Republicans, GLAAD, and ACLU LGBT & AIDS Project.

From 2004 to 2013, combined revenue for those organizations "increased 76 percent, from \$75.8 million to \$133.0 million (excluding in-kind revenue)." The report notes that the financial health of the profiled organizations was impacted negatively during the aforementioned recession and positively by philanthropist Ric Weiland's 2008 donation of \$65 million. A software programmer and developer, Weiland was one of the first employees at Microsoft and his posthumous bequest to LGBT advocacy organizations is the largest to date.

To read the complete MAP report and learn more about the missions of the participating organizations, visit www.lgbtmap.org.

Former alderman Berny Stone dies

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Former Ald. Bernard L. "Berny" Stone, who long represented the city's 50th Ward, passed away Dec. 22. He was 87.

Stone's health deteriorated quickly after he sustained a fall in his home Dec. 20, according to reports.

"He was the most honest, most wonderful, caring, loving [and] giving man. He lived for his community," daughter Ilana Feketitsch told ABC 7. "He was loved by so many people, the outpouring has been wonderful. He gave everything to people. They should just give back to him the way he did to everybody."

He was in office from 1973 through 2011, and, throughout the 1980s, was a prominent player in the "Council Wars" against Mayor Harold Washington, which saw a group of council members led by Stone's mentor, Ald. Ed Vrdolyak, uniformly oppose proposals supported by Washington. Stone switched parties for a time in the late 1980s as well, running on the Republican ticket for the office of Cook County recorder of deeds against Carol Moseley Braun, to whom he lost. He returned to the Democratic Party in 1990.

Stone's final campaign saw him lose to Debra Silverstein, the wife of state Sen. Ira Silverstein. Silverstein was one of only two candidates Rahm Emanuel publicly backed in that general election. Stone's supporters nevertheless posted "Emanuel/Stone" placards throughout the ward.

Stone said at the time that he was not worried by Emanuel's lack of support. In March

2011, he told NBC 5, "I don't think it's going to affect my race. ... When I'm re-elected, I'll work with him as a partner, as he indicates—that really is my intent in running rather than retiring."

Silverstein defeated Stone with 62 percent of the vote.

He said that he was supportive of LGBTs' concerns in a 2007 Windy City Times interview, but did not think they faced systemic discrimination. He also said that many of his constituents had little sympathy for those concerns.

"I've had problems that concern different nationalities," Stone said. "I've never had a problem concerning gender problems. I don't think there's any particular prejudice against gays and lesbians. I have a large segment of Orthodox Jews who have an in-built prejudice against gays and lesbians. It's part of their religious training. But on the other hand, Jews are, by nature, extremely liberal."

Stone added that a discussion with a rabbi opened his eyes to the plight of the LGBT community. Stone asked the rabbi about the biblical interpretation that homosexuality is an abomination, to which the rabbi replied, "While I do not condone this lifestyle, it is absolutely unacceptable that everybody isn't entitled to have a right to be whatever they feel like being."

Stone called the discussion a "moving point" before voting for the 1988 Human Rights Ordinance that called for protections against anti-gay discrimination. He noted in the interview that he supported same-sex marriage as well.

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Looking back: Local passages

COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

—Joy Hightower Morris: Morris—the celebrated Chicago transgender- and HIV-rights activist; founder of TransActions; and organizing force behind the Legends Lunch All Stars Awards, honoring the lives and resilience of trans* individuals and those living with HIV/AIDS—passed away Dec. 6 after a long battle with cancer.

—Carl Occhipinti, 61, the retired artistic director of Village Players, passed away Jan. 3.

—Michael McGuire, 55, passed away Jan. 5 of congestive heart failure. Among his jobs were managing the liquor department at Walgreens, tending bar at Broadway Limited, and working at the Ram booksore for 18 years. He also served low-income men, women and children living with AIDS at the Vital Bridges Grocery-Land grocery center on Chicago's North Side.

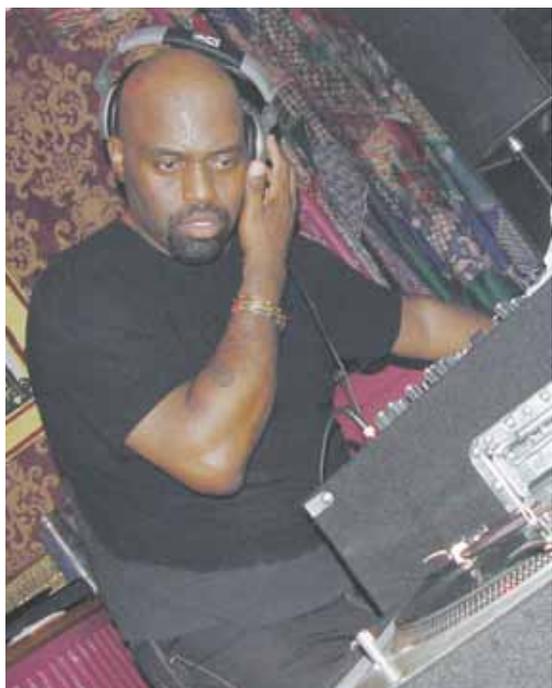
—Bob Gammie, 88, a longtime community leader and activist, died January 30 due to cardiac arrest. Known as "Ma" or "Gammie" among

victory because of Gray's critical health situation.

—House-music pioneer Frankie Knuckles passed away March 31. He was 59. The producer, who was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1996, mixed work by artists such as Chaka Khan, Michael Jackson and Depeche Mode.

—Ron Novak, 64, passed away unexpectedly on April 2. He had a successful career in the restaurant business, in many capacities. At the time of his passing he was helping train others at Center on Halsted to follow their dreams and become working members of the food industry.

—Tajma Hall, 44, a Chicago-based entertainer who shined worldwide, died April 19, of cardiac arrest at Evanston Hospital. Hall won numerous pageants around the world, including Miss Continental Plus in 2007, Miss Gay USofA At Large in 2008, and the Miss All-American about 15 years ago. Hall also hosted the popular Hy-Drag Revue at Hydrate Nightclub in Lakeview.



Left: Frankie Knuckles in 2001. Right: Tajma Hall. Photo by Kirk Williamson

many of his friends, he was active in the community for more than 60 years.

—Ron Dorfman, 73, longtime journalist and gay advocate, who, along with his partner of 20 years was among the first same-sex couples legally married in Illinois, died Feb. 10. Dorfman had heart disease, and his was among the marriages the courts allowed early due to medical reasons.

—Gordon Allen Locksley, 83, a private art dealer and collector of contemporary art, passed away quietly in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Feb. 1 after a brief illness.

—Challis Gibbs, 61, one of the plaintiffs in the case that won emergency marriage licenses in Illinois, died Feb. 24. Gibbs and her partner of 21 years, Elvie Jordan, were among the first few couples married after a judge ruled Dec. 9, 2013, that early gay marriages could be performed for health reasons.

—D.J. Boos (Danny W. Boos, Jr.), 48, passed away unexpectedly March 14. Boos moved to Chicago in 1989, where he embarked upon a long bartending stint at Bucks and Touche, which led to a career as a supervisor at Service Is Us staffing.

—Vernita Gray, one of Chicago's longest and most prolific activists for LGBT rights, died March 19. She was 65. Gray and wife Pat Ewert were the first same-sex couple married legally in Illinois, Nov. 27, 2013, after winning a court

—Clifford R. Duske, the loving life partner of Michael D. Frustini, passed away in April, according to The Chicago Tribune. He was also a loving member of the community who gave of himself selflessly—a true gentleman and an Angel.

—Paul Lutter, 68, passed away May 4 following complications from surgery. Lutter had been an attorney with the firm Bryan Cave LLC since 2004. Prior to working at Bryan Cave, Lutter was a partner with the law firm Ross and Hardies from 1971-2003. Lutter served on the boards of many Chicago area non-profits.

—Frank M. Robinson, 87, a former Chicagoan who moved to San Francisco and later became a speechwriter for gay politician Harvey Milk, died June 30. He was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2009.

—Greg Gravemier, 60, a longtime human-rights activist, passed away March 15 in Sterling, Virginia. Gravemier was especially active in progressive causes in Decatur, Illinois, where he lived for a number of years.

—Paul R. Rogers, 80, a retired national fashion director of men's apparel for Sears, passed away June 1.

—Raymond Hughes, 57, died June 25. Hughes worked as a paralegal, with his last employment at the American Civil Liberties Union.

—Wil Abtahi, 26, a textile artist and beloved partner of Lenya Friesner, died July 5. "She



Vernita Gray. Photo by Hal Baim

really was understanding and permissive that there are all sorts of people in the world, and that there's no one set way that all people have to be, or things that everyone has to like," said Freisner.

—Activist Joanne Marie Bristol, 59, passed away peacefully on July 19. Bristol was an occupational therapist by trade, working mainly with babies and children at Easter Seals, Children's Memorial Hospital and finally, Northwestern Hospital.

—Thomas C. Senesac, 63, died July 19 after a long illness. Senesac worked on the production of more than 80 feature films and many television series set on location in Chicago and was also artistic director at Chicago special-event floral company Botanicals, Inc.

—Veronica "Ro" Gazzillo (née Soper), who was an All-Star player and then an assistant coach for the Chicago Force, died unexpectedly Aug. 10, at her home in Evanston. She was 39. Gazzillo played for the Force in 2010 and was named an Independent Women's Football League All-Star and the 2010 Force Offensive MVP. She joined the Force coaching staff for its 2013 national championship season.

—Caryn Berman, 62, died Sept. 1 of cancer. Berman helped organize the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and was on the city's first Mayor's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues, under Mayor Harold Washington. Berman, a psychotherapist and social worker, was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1995.

—Point Foundation co-founder Carl Strickland, 40, died in a boating accident at Lake Tahoe, Nevada, on Aug. 22.

—Steven Moore, a former Chicago resident who moved to Colorado about two years ago and was the executive director of the National Gay Pilots Association (NGPA), died Oct. 27 in



Caryn Berman. Photo by Tracy Baim

a plane crash in Boulder County, Colorado. He was 35.

—Navy veteran Michele Parisi, 68, was found dead in her room Nov. 6, according to friends. Parisi joined the American Veterans for Equal Rights (at the time named Gay Lesbian Bisexual Veterans of America), in 1992. In 1997 she was elected chapter vice president for one year. Michele has been a faithful member attending nearly every meeting and event for the last 22 years.

—One-term Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne, the city's first and still-only female mayor, died Nov. 14 at age 81. Byrne was the first Chicago mayor to show support for the gay community. She issued an executive order banning discrimination in city employment and hiring, spoke out against police raids on gay bars, and backed Chicago's gay-rights ordinance during her term in office, which lasted 1979-1983.

—Dorothy Chvatal, 64, passed away Nov. 18. A lifelong Chicagoan, she worked for many years as a community health nurse and later as a licensed clinical social worker. She also was a longtime collective member at the Chicago Women's Health Center and was involved with the Center on Halsted.

—Timothy J. (Tim) Mitchell, 49, former Chicago Park District chief and Mayor Richard M. Daley aide, died Dec. 3 of natural causes.

—Ross M. Ramsey—the founder of House of Infinity who lived in New York and had direct ties to many national ballroom cities, particularly Chicago—died Dec. 2. He was in his 50s.

—State Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka, 70, who had just been re-elected, passed away from complications following a stroke Dec. 10. Long a major player in state politics, Topinka held several offices, among them state treasurer, state representative and state senator.

Alcaraz steps down from Abortion Fund

After nearly a decade as the executive director of the Chicago Abortion Fund (CAF), Gaylon Alcaraz is stepping down Dec. 31.

Former grantee and current deputy director Brittany Mostiller was slated to take the reigns as the new executive director effective Jan. 1, 2015.

In a statement, Alcaraz said, "In September 2015, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of CAF, it is the perfect time for new leadership, energy, goals and direction. ... Abortion funds should not exist. Every woman—if she needs it—should be able to access these services with or without insurance. Yet, in 2014 alone, we have seen outrageous, dangerous and paternalistic laws and restrictions that marginalize women even further."

Among Alcaraz's accomplishments was developing the "My Voice, My Choice" leadership group.



Gaylon Alcaraz. Image by Latoya Thorn Photography

Year in review: World news

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—**Arrested in Nigeria:** Following passage of the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act in Nigeria, more than three dozen gay men were arrested. Several organizations, including Human Rights First, expressed outrage at the development.

—**From Russia with hate:** Russia enacted its anti-gay propaganda law—which made for a lot of criticism at the Sochi Olympics held in February. Russian President Vladimir Putin poured fuel on the controversy before the event, saying gays visiting Russia for the Olympics could feel at ease as long as they “leave children in peace, please.”

—**Heroic:** Tori Johnson, the gay café manager of the Lindt Chocolate Cafe in Sydney, Australia, was killed as he fought off an armed terrorist who took the café and its patrons hostage, according to Towleroad. Johnson, who managed the café for two years, was trying to disarm the terrorist to provide cover for the other hostages as they fled during a moment in which the terrorist fell asleep. Johnson, 34, is survived by his partner of 14 years, Thomas Zinn.

—**No review:** India's Supreme Court refused to review its controversial decision to reinstate a 153-year-old law that criminalizes homosexuality. Judges dismissed petitions from the government and rights activists who say the order was wrong. The recent Supreme Court judgement overturned a landmark 2009 Delhi High Court ruling decriminalizing gay sex.

—**Bennett passes:** Mark Bennett, the openly gay mayor of the London district of Lambeth, died at age 44 of a suspected heart attack, according to the London Evening Standard. Bennett was an assistant to Alastair Campbell for the first four years of Tony Blair's Labour government from 1997 to 2001, and was first elected as mayor in 2005.

—**Change is good:** Uganda President Yoweri Museveni signed his country's Anti-Homosexuality Bill in February. The measure would mandate life-prison sentences for people convicted of homosexuality. However, in August, the Constitutional Court of Uganda ruled the law invalid.

—**French press:** More than 100,000 conservative French people marched through Paris and Lyon, accusing the government of “family-phobia” for legalizing same-sex marriage and other planned policies they say will harm traditional families. The marchers—expressing growing frustration with the unpopular left-wing government—denounced new sex-equality lessons in schools and urged the government not to legalize medical procedures to help same-sex couples have children.

—**Don't want therapy:** For the first time in its history, the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) expressed concern over the practice of conversion therapy being used on LGBT youth in the United States. The historic development came a day after leaders from

the National Center for Lesbian Rights' (NCLR) #BornPerfect campaign, Samantha Ames and Samuel Brinton, testified before the Committee and the U.S. State Department and asked them to address the practice with the U.S. government.

—**With this ring:** After legalizing same-sex marriages in July 2013, the first official marriage ceremonies in England and Wales took place right after midnight on March 29, 2014. At Islington Town Hall in London, at 12:03 a.m., Peter McGrath and his partner of 17 years, David Cabreza, were married in front of dozens of family and friends.

—**Daley news:** British Olympic diver Tom Daley said he's a gay man, months after he told fans he was bisexual. “Of course I still fancy girls,” Daley said on a YouTube video posted in December 2013. Later that month, it was revealed that the Olympic diver, now 20, is dating Oscar-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, 40.

—**Marching on:** In November, nearly a thousand gay-rights activists marched through central New Delhi to demand an end to discrimination against gays in India's deeply conservative society. Indian gays are demanding that the government remove a colonial-era law banning same-sex relations. India's Supreme Court last year reversed a lower-court order that decriminalized gay sex.

—**Some progress:** However, India's top court recognized the country's transgender community as a third gender in a landmark judgment and human-rights groups, praising the development, have called on the government to ensure their equal treatment. There are hundreds of thousands of transgenders in India, say activists, but because they are not legally recognized, they are ostracized, discriminated against, abused and often forced into prostitution.

—**Delay in Brunei:** Brunei has said it has delayed a law punishing gay sex by stoning, but said it will happen “in the very near future.” The predominantly Muslim nation in southeast Asia has faced international criticism after adopting a new penal code calling for death by stoning for several crimes that include adultery and rape in addition to homosexuality. No confirmed new date was given for the start of the punishments, which will also eventually include flogging and the severing of limbs.

—**Bolly, gee whiz:** The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights launched the first-ever Bollywood-style UN music video at a press conference in Mumbai, India, to promote its Free & Equal campaign for LGBT equality. The two-and-a-half minute video, called “The Welcome,” stars actress and former Miss India Celina Jaitley.

—**Wurst is the best:** Conchita Wurst—the bearded drag-queen alter ego of 25-year-old Austrian Thomas Neuwirth—won this year's Eurovision Song Contest, held in Copenhagen. Performing in a skintight dress with long hair and a full beard, Wurst scored 290 points to



The late gay codebreaker Alan Turing, the subject of the new movie *The Imitation Game*.

become Austria's first Eurovision winner since 1966. She has since done everything from being a runway model to releasing a song and video.

—**Ban banned:** South African National Blood Service dropped a ban that prohibited gay men from donating blood. However, a ban of six months will still be applied on anyone who had sex with a new partner, and there's a blanket ban on anyone with multiple sexual partners.

—**Making priorities:** U.S. Sen. Ed Markey introduced the International Human Rights Defense Act to direct the Department of State to consider preventing and responding to discrimination and violence against the LGBT community a foreign-policy priority. In addition to setting LGBT rights as an international policy priority, the bill would also require the State Department to devise a global strategy to achieve the goal of encouraging other nations to enact legislative protections and establish a position in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor responsible for coordinating the effort.

—**Stay with him:** British singer Sam Smith officially came out of the closet. He has said, “My aim is to tell people how good it's been for me so that, hopefully, gay men or parents with gay children can look at my story and think, ‘Wow, that's how it should be. That's what we can work towards.’” Smith was nominated for six Grammys, tying him with Beyonce and Pharrell Williams.

—**Dearly departed:** Six passengers aboard Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, which crashed in Ukraine July 17, were confirmed as researchers headed for the 20th International AIDS Conference, which began July 20 in Melbourne, Australia. Two hundred ninety-eight individuals lost their lives in the crash, which has triggered political turmoil between Russia several nations, including the United States.

—**This is Ian:** After years of denial, Australian swimming champion Ian Thorpe, 31, revealed he is gay in an exclusive interview with Sir Michael Parkinson. In his own autobiography *This Is Me*, published in 2012, the swimmer said that he found questions about his sexuality hurtful, writing: “For the record, I am not gay and all my sexual experiences have been straight.”

—**Goodbye, Berlin:** Berlin's openly gay mayor, Klaus Wowereit, announced plans to step down amid an ongoing situation over the city's new airport. As mayor of the German capital since 2001, he was credited with giving it a “poor, but sexy” brand internationally. Wowereit, 60, was widely popular; however, his reputation was tarnished by the debacle over the opening of Berlin-Brandenburg Airport, which was to be inaugurated in late 2011 but is still not open.

—**Before, Turing and after:** The Queen of England granted a royal pardon for internationally acclaimed British codebreaker and computer scientist Alan Turing. Turing (the subject of the new film *The Imitation Game*) took his own life in 1954 after being convicted two years prior of having consensual sex with a 19-year-old male. The pardon comes a decade after gay activists and straight allies lobbied the British government for a posthumous pardon for Turing saying his conviction of “gross indecency” was an injustice.

—**Disruption:** Fierce anti-gay sentiment and violent threats shut down Bahama's first Pride event just as it was starting. Early in the event, organizer Victor Rollins posted a photo on Facebook of himself with a Pride flag. His life was threatened soon after, leading him to cancel the festival's remaining events. Also, leading up to Pride, local newspapers and talk shows stirred up opposition to the festival.

—**Vlad to the bone:** The LGBT publication *The Advocate* named Russia President Vladimir Putin its 2014 “Person of the Year.” The magazine stated in a press release that Putin's “crusade against LGBT Russians, and the outrage and protests his actions sparked” earned him the title. The publication also stated, “The prospect of another decade under Putin is devastating. Despite encouraging development such as the International Olympic Committee's new mandate requiring prospective host cities to sign an antidiscrimination clause, Russia's LGBT activists report few breakthroughs. What hope they have is precarious and underground.”

—**An important addition:** After backlash over the Sochi, Russia, games—overshadowed by the host country Russia's anti-gay laws—the International Olympic Committee (IOC) made another attempt at formally declaring its inclusiveness of the LGBT community. Members of the IOC unanimously approved a measure to rewrite the Olympic Charter's non-discrimination policy, adding sexual orientation to the list. Although LGBT activists lauded the move, many feel that more needs to be done, including adding gender identity.

Windy City Times' full list of 2014 world events is at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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LOCAL from cover

been legally married in other states would have those marriages recognized immediately, the clerk's office said. The ruling only applied to Cook County. A previous ruling had already allowed marriages for same-sex couples wherein a partner had a serious medical condition.

—**Schock value:** Illinois Congressman Aaron Schock (R) closed down his Instagram account after a number of Internet sources fueled speculation about his sexuality. Schock, the youngest member of Congress, has long denied rumors about being gay, and has been a vigorous opponent of LGBT rights.

—**Marijuana delay:** Legislation allowing for the use of medical marijuana in Illinois took effect Jan. 1, but the state had yet to iron out many specific plans for the law's full implementation. Consequently, marijuana wouldn't be available for patient use for many months, state officials said. As of December, the state was still sorting through preparations for the program.

—**Name-change guide:** Equality Illinois released a guide Jan. 7 that helps transgender Illinoisans navigate name changes and gender marker revisions on state documents. The guide covers documentation change including Illinois driver's licenses, birth certificates, social security cards and passports.

—**In the zone:** Broadway Youth Center (BYC), on Jan. 17, made its case before the Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals regarding a variance that would allow it to stay in its current location on Wellington Avenue. BYC supporters filled the gallery of the City Council chambers at 121 N. LaSalle St. Four days later, the board announced that BYC could stay put.

—**Asylum support:** The Chicago LGBT Asylum Support Program (CLASP) was launched in January as a source of support and safety for LGBT people escaping a life of persecution in their home countries and arriving in the United States for a new life. Broadway United Methodist Church acted as a hub and fiscal agent through which people could make donations. "I think we understand the thru line of God's word is the word of love," said Rev. Lois McCullen Parr, pastor at the Broadway United Methodist Church and CLASP Co-Founder.

—**Mysterious allegations:** State Treasurer Dan Rutherford, on Jan. 31, called a press conference to say that a Chicago attorney told his lawyers and him that allegations being investigated in Rutherford's office would go away if they paid the originator of the complaints \$300,000. But Rutherford, who was running for governor, would not divulge who had made the allegations, or what the allegations were. In February, Ed Michalowski, a former aide, filed a federal lawsuit accusing Rutherford of both sexual harassment and pressuring him to do campaign work on the Treasurer's Office time. The suit was dismissed in June. By that time, however, Rutherford had lost in the primary election to Bruce Rauner.

—**Munar takes over:** Howard Brown Health Center in February announced that longtime AIDS and LGBT health advocate David Munar would take over as its new president and CEO starting April 1. The selection followed a long and sometimes stalled 18-month national search process. AFC Vice-President of Policy John Peller would eventually take over Munar's old post as AFC President and CEO.

—**Stoli's back:** Stolichnaya Vodka returned to the shelves of Boystown nightclub Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., in February after having been banned there and other local bars since the previous summer. The owners said the decision to reverse the ban came about because of Stoli's donations to pro-LGBT causes.

—**A little help from our friends:** Officials of Equality Illinois PAC, as well as many of its supporters, gathered at Hubbard Inn on Feb. 27 to raise financial support for eight legislators who voted "yes" on SB10 in 2013. Among those in attendance were state Rep. Sam Yingling, Ald. Deb Mell, Cook County Clerk David Orr and ESPN.com contributor Christina Kahr. "All of



Music director Colin Collette and Ald. Deb Mell were part of the local news scene in 2014. Photo of Collette from a video by Matt Simonette; photo of Mell by Hal Baim

the candidates are looking good in the primary, but we have to leave no stone unturned," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "We have to stand by our friends."

—**It takes TWO:** Truth Wins Out (TWO) founder Wayne Besen held his organization's first Chicago meeting March 6 to introduce community members to his organization's mission of debunking the myths and lies spread by anti-gay organizations. Besen moved TWO to Chicago from Vermont the previous November.

—**Not a joking matter:** A purportedly satirical article threatening to out five city council members unless they respond to the demands of Chicago taxi drivers sparked objections from gay-rights advocates and community members. The article, which the taxi-related trade publication The Chicago Dispatcher published March 6, said, "... We did not want it to come to this but our city government has been allowing unfair competition in violation of the law."

—**Remembering Vernita:** Hundreds of friends, family and acquaintances of activist Vernita Gray gathered at the Goodman Theatre March 31 to remember her legacy and pay tribute to her. The gathering was officiated by Paul Fairchild and Mary Morten, who said that Gray was "a person who led a life of activism, a life of joy and a life of unparalleled gratitude."

—**Fisher retires:** About 175 friends, family and colleagues gathered at the law offices of Winston & Strawn to help AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) Executive Director Ann Hilton Fisher celebrate her retirement April 3. In her remarks, Fisher praised and thanked all the legal professionals who worked with ALCC as well as the individuals she called the "infrastructure" of ALCC: the support staff, development team, donors and board members who kept the various cogs of the organization going.

—**Prom's a drag:** Jacob Szymanski, an openly gay student at Carl Sandburg High School, announced that he'd be attending his prom as his alter ego Harlet Wench. "I'm going to my senior prom in drag because I hope to help other kids in the future," he said. "... If I were to go as a boy, nobody would care, but if I put on the wig, the heels, the makeup, and the dress, suddenly people are interested."

—**York statue stolen:** A statue commemorating the late Mary York, the lesbian attorney and community activist who died of cancer in 2008, was stolen from the Howard Brown Health Center Peace Garden. The statue had been stolen previously in 2009.

—**Brown Elephant moves:** On April 9, the Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) announced that its flagship Brown Elephant resale shop would be moving to a new location at 3020 N. Lincoln Ave. the following July.

—**Transgender suit:** Lambda Legal, on April 15, filed a lawsuit on behalf a Mattoon, Ill., transgender woman who says she was denied medical care after she requested hormone replacement therapy from her physician. Naya Taylor said that when she requested Dr. Aja Lystila, her primary-care physician, start her on hormone-replacement therapy in order to help treat her gender dysphoria, Lystila refused.

—**Eychaner honored:** Longtime businessman, activist and philanthropist Fred Eychaner received a standing ovation from the hundreds of people attending the Lambda Legal Bon Foster benefit April 23 at the Art Institute of Chicago. Eychaner was given the Lambda Legal National Liberty Award, the first time the honor has been presented outside of New York or Los Angeles.

—**Criminal transmission:** Officials from local AIDS organizations spoke against an announcement April 24 that a Chicago man was being charged with criminal transmission of HIV. The man had told his girlfriend that his late wife had died from ovarian cancer, but the wife's family later said that she had died from AIDS complications. The girlfriend later tested positive for HIV. Another man was arrested for criminal HIV transmission in October.

—**Pauel becomes judge:** Attorney Linda Pauel, a lesbian who last year withdrew her bid to be elected judge of the circuit court of Cook County, 10th subcircuit, was elected to be an associate judge. She was one of 13 individuals who were elected in an internal election administered by the circuit court of Cook County.

—**Gay Mart closes:** After 21 years in Lakeview, owner Shelly Rosenbaum made the decision to close Gay Mart. "For the last four or five years, business has not been good at all," he told Windy City Times. "I've loved it, but Gay Mart has had its time." Rosenbaum said that enthusiasm that for his unique items has declined, at least in terms of people walking through his door. A smaller store with similar merchandise was planned.

—**Spin me right round:** Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., closed its doors over Memorial Day weekend then re-opened under new ownership over the summer as Whiskey Trust and Chloe's. But ownership shifted in late 2014, and both establishments were temporarily closed by the end of the year.

—**Marriage laws kick in:** Jim Darby and Patrick Bova, two longtime gay activists who were part of the legal and political fight for marriage equality in Illinois, were wed as part of a series of weddings held June 2 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Gov. Pat Quinn, who signed the marriage equality bill into law, was at the ceremony, which was officiated by Jim Bennett, Midwest Director of Lambda Legal. MCA and Equality Illinois hosted 15 couples, opening MCA's galleries and sculpture garden for complimentary ceremonies and post-ceremony festivities.

—**Sun-Times column:** The Chicago Sun-Times, on June 3, removed a column that suggested that actress Laverne Cox "is not a woman." The essay, published May 30 in the Sun-Times, was written by Kevin D. Williamson and originally appeared in the conservative publication National Review. The piece also posited that transgender persons are living in denial of the "reality" of the gender they were assigned at birth.

—**Job switch:** Longtime activist Rick Garcia became community outreach coordinator for Cook County Jail. "I've known Sheriff Dart since

he was a state rep," Garcia said. "He worked with us on all the important issues, including with marriage. I had told him that I was looking to make a change, and then later he asked if I would come work for him. So there I am now, firmly ensconced at the jail."

—**Montrose Rocks:** Montrose Beach was closed in the early evening June 29 after two women were shot nearby. The area had been for many years the location of the Montrose Rocks post-parade celebration, which had—officially, at least—been cancelled this year. Nevertheless, thousands of people gathered there anyway once the parade began to wind down.

—**Dyke March:** More than 1,000 people (according to organizers), representing each of the multifaceted elements of the LGBTQ community and its allies, walked at the 2014 Dyke March and Latina/o Pride Picnic at Humboldt Park on June 28. Led by a division of Dykes on Bikes, they walked hand in hand along a one-mile route from Roberto Clemente High School down Division street toward the Humboldt Park boathouse.

—**Dueling petitions:** Shortly after the Pride Parade, duel petitions were launched online, one asking that the parade be moved downtown, where local resources would presumably not be overwhelmed, the other asking that it stay in place. Ald. Tom Tunney's office later released a survey about the matter, and said respondents remained in favor of leaving the parade in place.

—**Mell divorces:** Ald. Deb Mell announced via Twitter and Facebook that her marriage to Christin Mell was ending. The couple had been married in Iowa in 2011, followed by a ceremony on Chicago's North Side.

—**Engagement controversy:** Colin Collette was fired from his position at Holy Family Catholic Church after he and his partner, William Nifong, announced their engagement over social media. Collette tried to return to the position, and had support from many Holy Family community members. He also met with Cardinal Francis George about the matter, but to little avail. In early December, he filed a discrimination complaint against church officials, asking to have his job back.

—**Accident settlement:** The surviving partner of a prominent community activist was among those included in a settlement after a 2011 Indiana stage collapse. Lawyers representing victims of the accident and their families announced Dec. 19 that they had reached a settlement totaling nearly \$50 million. Among those included was Alisha Marie Brennon, whose domestic partner, Christina Santiago, was killed in the incident.

—**Awareness for Eisha:** Channyn Lynne Parker, a community advocate who has visited transgender detainees at the Cook County Jail, began raising awareness of the plight of Eisha Love, a transgender woman of color who has been accused of murder and faces 10 years in prison. Love said that she acted in self-defense in the incident in question. Parker posted her thoughts on her Facebook page, ultimately leading to a Change.org petition, "#FreeEisha," that told Love's story.

—**New archbishop:** Bishop Blase Cupich of Spokane, Washington, was announced as the successor to Cardinal Francis George in leading the Archdiocese of Chicago on Sept. 20. This was Pope Francis' first major appointment. While some gay Catholics cheered the selection, others were more skeptical. Cupich purportedly shares the pope's stated commitment to fighting poverty and economic injustice, but nevertheless took stands, albeit measured ones, against the referendum that ultimately led to gay marriage in Washington state.

—**Rauner elected:** A majority of Illinois voters Nov. 4 said they want Republican Bruce Rauner as their next governor. Rauner's victory came after a long and expensive battle against incumbent Democrat Pat Quinn.

For the full list, visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

The listing of national news of 2014 will appear in the Jan. 7, 2015, issue of Windy City Times.

Advocates: Changes to blood-donation policy not enough

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced recommendations to change the longtime ban on blood donations by gay and bisexual men Dec. 23.

The new recommended policy, issued to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, would change the blood-donor deferral period for men who have sex with men from indefinite deferral to one year since the last sexual contact, according to an FDA statement.

"This recommended change is consistent with the recommendation of an independent expert advisory panel the HHS Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability, and will better align the deferral period with that of other men and women at increased risk for HIV infection," said FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg in the statement.

However, advocates for lifting the ban said that much more progress remains to be made on the issue.

Ramon Gardenhire, vice-president of policy for AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), said, "We definitely applaud the FDA for changing course on this discriminatory ban. We would like more done, but this is still a great start."

Gardenhire added, however, "A one-year ban is still discriminatory and still perpetuates stigma against gay and bisexual men, who can make fine blood donors."

Virginia-based advocate Caleb Laieski, who in October filed a lawsuit that asked the ban be overturned, said, "Today, progress was certain-



Lambda Legal's Scott Schoettes. Photo from the organization

ly made and more lives will be saved because of it. However, the one-year ban is still discriminatory and unnecessary. As HHS and the FDA clearly state, their testing is extremely accurate and the window period for HIV and STDs to show up is way under a year, so the year ban is still mind-blowing and non-science based."

Scott Schoettes, Lambda Legal Senior Attorney and director of the HIV Project, said in a statement that "blood donation policy should be based on current scientific knowledge and experience, not unfounded fear, generalizations and stereotypes. Merely changing the parameters of this outdated policy does not al-

ter its underlying discriminatory nature, eliminate its negative and stigmatizing effects, nor transform it into a policy based on current scientific and medical knowledge."

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, D-Ill., who has been active in a push to change the policy, called the change "disappointing" in a statement.

"A time-based deferral focusing solely on men who have sex with men is still discriminatory and fails to exclude donors based on actual risk factors," said Quigley. "However, as the leader of the bipartisan, bicameral effort to reverse the FDA's discriminatory policy, I remain encouraged by this ongoing conversation to change the outdated policy. I will continue to fight for a deferral policy based on behavioral risks, commensurate with the rest of the population and based on sound science, bringing equality for the LGBT community while still protecting the U.S. blood supply."

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., who also has been active in trying to get the ban lifted, added in a statement, "While this announcement represents needed progress, I remain concerned that it does not achieve our goal of putting in place a policy that is based on sound science and allows all healthy individuals to donate. ...The Administration must continue to work towards implementing blood donation policies based on individual risk factors instead of singling out one group of people and turning away healthy, willing donors, even when we face serious blood shortages."

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association President Henry Ng and Executive Director Hector Vargas pledged to continue to have the ban fully lifted in a statement.

"GLMA supports nothing less than a paradigm shift away from any categorical restriction on MSM donating blood to a blood donation deferral policy based in individual behaviors," said Ng and Vargas. "...Knowledge about prevention, transmission and screening for HIV has changed significantly in the last 30 years and current testing technologies and window peri-

ods for detecting HIV and other blood-borne illnesses in the blood supply support a deferral period for at-risk sexual behavior of substantially less than one year. These developments only serve to reinforce GLMA's position that any categorical blood donation deferral for MSM for any length of time is arbitrary, stigmatizing and not scientifically supported."

Officials from the American Red Cross and the blood bank industry have opposed the ban, as has the American Medical Association. A September study released by the Los Angeles-based Williams Institute suggested that lifting the ban would increase the total annual blood supply by about 2 percent-4 percent. Basing their estimates on American Red Cross figures suggesting each donation has the potential to impact three lives, the researchers concluded that lifting the ban could potentially save the lives of 1.8 million people.

Thirty-five injured in Zimbabwe attack

Approximately 35 people were injured when a group of men forced their way into a private event that the organization Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), according to a BuzzFeed article.

GALZ said that at least one of the attackers—who numbered between 12 to 15—carried a gun, and the group beat attendees "using logs, iron bars, empty beer bottles and clenched fists." The men who attacked the event in Harare, the country's capital, also reportedly "demanded cash and gadgets from the members present in the hall whilst attacking them."

The attacks follow an incident in June 2013 in which five men allegedly linked to the youth wing of Mugabe's Zanu-PF party forced their way into GALZ offices.

The original article is at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/thirty-five-injured-in-attack-on-lgbt-event-in-zimbabwe#.xmvoK-MOLbB>.

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DANA
RUDOLPH

MOMBIAN

Seeking LGBTQ
parents in history

Opponents of LGBTQ equality often try to make LGBTQ parents seem like a new and untested phenomenon, and therefore something to be avoided. The history of LGBTQ parents and our children, however, goes back further than one might think.

The Greek poet Sappho, whose island home of Lesbos gave us the term "lesbian," may have had a daughter named "Cleis." That would mean that the history of LGBTQ parents goes back to around 600 BCE.

The existence of her daughter is only attested through a few fragments, though, making it far from certain. It's also anachronistic to apply modern identity terms to historical figures, even such a lesbian icon as Sappho. The possibility of her existence, however, should encourage us to reflect that the history of parents who fall under a broad LGBTQ umbrella (not tied to modern conceptions of the terms) likely goes back as far as the history of LGBTQ people as a whole. They may not have been "out and proud" like many modern LGBTQ parents, but we can still see them as our forebears.

Sticking with better documented cases, Oscar Wilde was the father of two boys with his wife Constance Lloyd, and apparently a loving one. His son Vyvyan, in his book *Son of Oscar Wilde*, wrote about Wilde's relationship with him and his brother, "He was a hero to us both ... a real companion to us. ... He would go down on all fours on the nursery floor, being in turn a lion, a wolf, a horse, caring nothing for his usually

immaculate appearance." Alas, when the boys were 8 and 9, their mother took them to Switzerland after Wilde's trial for "gross indecency" (having same-sex relations) and they never saw him again.

Vita Sackville-West had relationships with several women, including fellow writers Virginia Woolf and Violet Trefusis, and had two children with her husband, Harold George Nicolson (who also had same-sex relationships). Her son, Nigel Nicolson, later used her account of the affair with Trefusis as the heart of a book about his parents, *Portrait of a Marriage*. There, he called his mother's description of the affair "one of the most moving pieces that she ever wrote." While he acknowledged both parents' same-sex relationships, he also said their marriage "became stronger and finer as a result." Their love affairs were mere "ports of call," but it was "to the harbour that each returned." Nevertheless, it is easy to see Nicolson as the product of parents within the LGBTQ spectrum, and to place another brushstroke in our picture of LGBTQ family history.

Looking only at parents who had a more modern sense of their LGBTQ identities, out LGBTQ parents go back to the very start of the LGBTQ-rights movement. Most still had their children within the context of different-sex marriages, but were more likely than in earlier times to leave those marriages, even though this often meant losing custody of their children. Del Martin, one of the founders in 1955 of Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian rights organization in the United States, was one such parent. Not surprisingly, her organization held some of the first known discussion groups on lesbian motherhood—way back in 1956. (See Daniel Winunwe Rivers' *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, and Their Children in the United States since World War II*.)

Even the term "gayby boom"—referring to same-sex couples starting their families together—is already more than two decades old, dating to at least March 1990, when *Newsweek* reported, "a new generation of gay parents has

produced the first-ever 'gayby boom.'" That means that many of the children from that boom are themselves now adults—while many of the first generation of out parents are becoming grandparents.

Think of it this way: The fictional Heather who had two mommies was in preschool in Lesléa Newman's classic 1989 children's book. If she were real, she'd now be in her late 20s.

Those who continue to insist that LGBTQ parents are not good for children have failed to realize that if that were true (even leaving aside the extensive social science research to the contrary), there would be many more maladjusted adults running around. Analyses from UCLA's Williams Institute have found that currently, between 2.3 and 4 million adults have an LGBTQ parent. If they suffered harm because of that, someone surely would have noticed the connection by now.

As a lesbian mom, I believe that learning the history of LGBTQ parents and our children can also help us feel less alone, less like we are the first to face each challenge. Having confidence that others have succeeded before us can translate into confidence in our parenting skills, which in turn can positively impact our children.

Knowing the struggles—and triumphs—of LGBTQ parents in the past can also give us hope and strength in overcoming the challenges—legal, political, social, and emotional—that we still face.

And seeing how the early organizations for LGBTQ parents helped shape the overall LGBTQ-rights movement of today (a story told in Rivers' book and in the 2006 documentary *Mom's Apple Pie: The Heart of the Lesbian Mothers' Custody Movement*) can inspire us to keep contributing to that broader effort, even as we balance the demands of work and family.

The work of exploring our history must continue.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBT parents.

LETTERS

Shame on you

Dear Editor:

We in Gay Liberation Network join The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer (LGBTQ) Immigrant Rights Coalition of Chicago in its sharp criticism of the Rahm Emanuel administration and Chicago City Council for its decision to honor Cardinal Francis George. What appears to be shameless pandering to Catholic Chicagoans by vote-hustling politicians led by Emanuel was also grossly insulting to LGBTQ Chicagoans.

George has not only acted with deliberate intent to punish immigrant-rights groups who endorsed marriage equality. George and his fellow Illinois bishops worked tirelessly to defeat marriage equality in Springfield. They lost that battle, but it was not for lack of trying.

In addition, George fought our equal rights in all other areas from employment discrimination to going so far as to shut down Catholic Charities placement of children after courts ruled that Catholic foster care agencies receiving state funds must follow state law and place kids in qualified same-sex homes. George sought to protect pedophile priests from criminal prosecution, until forced to take action by outraged public opinion and abuse survivors' pressure.

It is appalling that the City of Chicago, Rahm

Emanuel and his City Council would honor a man so vicious in his bigotry toward LGBTQ Chicagoans. This outrage shows that much work remains to be done.

Bob Schwartz
 Gay Liberation Network

Grant and rave

The "2012 Tracking Report: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Grantmaking by U.S. Foundations" lists foundations by the total amounts granted in support of LGBTQ issues. The same report lists the Arcus Foundation as the second highest giver and the Gill Foundation as the third highest supporter of LGBTQ issues.

The Rainbow Sash Movement (RSM) has opted not to apply for this type of grant money because we feel outside organizations who are not Catholic are trying to affect the internal decision making of the Catholic Church. In our opinion, this is a slippery slope and we should not fool ourselves about that.

We also recognize that Dignity, New Ways Ministry and Fortunate Families all have been recipients of this money. Our vision of working for change in the Church is different; we come from a faith-based perspective, and believe the discussion needs to be brought openly and honestly into the pews of our Church.

After speaking with the current president of Dignity and a board member of Fortunate Families, I became aware that Dignity's local chapters were not aware of the reception of these funds, and that Fortunate Families Board members would really rather not talk about it.

—The Arcus Foundation, founded in 2000 by Jon Stryker, focuses on gay rights and "conservation of the great apes." Since 2010, it has given about \$1.5 million to self-identified Catholic groups such as Dignity's Equally Blessed Coalition.

—The Gill Foundation awarded \$100,000 to the Catholics United Education Fund in 2012. That single grant covered most of that fund's annual budget of \$111,819, as Catholic News Agency's Kevin Jones found by examining the organization's tax return.

—In 2004, the Gill Foundation gave Dignity USA a grant of \$10,000, following a \$7,500 grant to Dignity in 2003.

We are concerned that the reception of such funds have strings attached, which are not based on Catholic social teaching. Furthermore, it is the RSM's opinion that these funds have been funneled to these organizations in a manner that challenges a culture's ethics.

Our hope is not to curse the darkness, but rather to light a candle.

Rainbow Sash Movement
 Chicago

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
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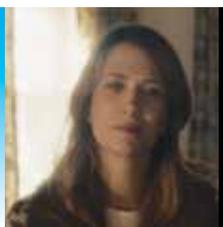
CLOSE TO YOU

Jonathan Meyer's *Oubliette* was one of the most captivating dance performances (and companies) this year. See below.

MOVIES

'Skeleton' crew.

Page 18

Kristen Wiig in *The Skeleton Twins*
Photo from *Roadside Attractions*

DISH

Return of the mac.

Page 20

The Butcher's Tap's mac 'n cheese
Photo by Ed Negron

MUSIC

2014 concerts.

Page 22

Photo of Sam Smith
by Jerry Nunn

Lucky seven: The best in Chicago dance this year

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

It has been a wonderful year for dance audiences in Chicago, with a wealth of dance emerging from the community, and exemplary tours making a stop in our great city. Remarkable remounts and freshly reimagined works stood alongside an abundance of new and innovative performances, including a few surprises. Seven standouts emerged from the pack, though this consolidated list could easily be expanded to twenty:

Something old

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan visited the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University in March for the highly anticipated reconstruction of Lin Hwai-min's iconic 1994 work **Songs of the Wanderers**. In our hyper-stimulated, fast-paced lives, *Songs of the Wanderers* requires much patience—sometimes frustratingly slow to develop—which makes the exhilarating climax all the more worth it. *Songs of the Wanderers* teeters between dance and the divine; images of golden Taiwanese rice cascading from the sky to pile at a praying monk's feet, and the methodical raking of each performance's three-and-a-half tons of it into a giant-sized Zen garden won't soon, if ever, fade.

The Museum of Contemporary Art presented a very different but equally significant work in bringing the 30th-anniversary tour of **Rosas danst Rosas** (1983) to its Edlis Neeson Theater. The mesmerizing dance is a ferociously incessant score of repeated steps and gestures, divided into three distinct sections. It's a mad-

dening maze that audience members will find to be completely brilliant or entirely obtuse. Indeed, audience members began to trickle out of the theater after about 10 minutes last October, leaving the rest of us to gaze on the pristinely restored, revolutionary work.

Something new

The latest creation from Jonathan Meyer is **Oubliette**, premiering last month in a tiny outbuilding nestled in a North Side park. Meyer—whose collective with partner Julia Rae Antonick and sound guru Joe St. Charles is called *Khecari*—is somewhat of a madman, whittling away at all perceptions of what dance can and should be to carve out an experience that is wholly new. The quartet *Oubliette* is stationed in a five foot-by-eight foot pit with audience members (only 12 per showing) peering down from six feet above. It feels voyeuristic and uncomfortable, as though looking in on rabid animals ready to strike at a moment's notice. On the contrary, the four dancers of *Oubliette* are somehow able to dance in that box, exploiting its every possibility and, an hour later, leaving us utterly satisfied.

Michelle Kranicke's *Zephyr* Dance hardly resembles itself from 10 years ago. Kranicke has been wise to allow her company's mission to evolve alongside her work, and has found a gem in **The Balance in Between**. In a developing process that it likely to span another two years, Kranicke's September installation at Defibrillator Gallery would be one of the space's last public performances. The dance community was dealt a pretty harsh blow in losing Defibril-

DanceWorks
Chicago in "From
Here to There."
Photo by Vin Reed

lator, a tiny space on Milwaukee Avenue that became a popular hotbed for experimental performance. *Zephyr* is not for the faint of heart; Kranicke challenges her audiences with durational performance that takes a bit of patience to get through, but (at least in the case of *The Balance in Between*) is worth the wait.

Something borrowed

Christopher Wheeldon's **Swan Lake** saw its Chicago premiere with the Joffrey Ballet—only three weeks after a highly successful mixed-rep program that included historic gems George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* and Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* alongside the absolutely gorgeous *RaKu* on loan from San Francisco Ballet's resident choreographer Yuri Possokhov. In a refashioned telling of the classic story ballet, Wheeldon kept all the best bits from Marius Petipa's original in tact (as with his *La Bayadere*, performed by the Joffrey last season). Updated characters and a new setting modeled after Edgar Degas' ballerina paintings give a soft, impressionist feel to the white ballet (not to mention the slightly happier ending).

Something blue (i.e., honorable mentions)

These concerts aren't blue, per se, but definitely deserve a mention among the best dance moments of 2014. One of the first events to

hit the winter dance season was the kickoff of the Harris Theater's spinoff to its **Eat to the Beat** lunchtime series. In this first installment, a DanceWorks Chicago premiere was to be the inaugural *Eat (and Drink) to the Beat*, a relatively informal showing that might have escaped notice until a tragic accident suddenly took the life of dancer Marco Antonio Huicochea Gonzalez. In a resilient and brave "show-must-go-on" performance, DanceWorks took to the stage with a reconfigured program and a touching tribute to Gonzalez, leaving no dry eyes in the full house.

River North Dance Chicago (RNDC) celebrates its silver anniversary in 2014-15, and the **season kickoff** at the Harris Theater this fall put RNDC back on the map. The concert featured items from the archives, including a high-kicking, high-ponytailed, all-out jazzy closer in Sherry Zunker's perfectly restored 1992 *Reality of a Dreamer* (unitards, jazz boots, and all) Artistic Director Frank Chaves premiered *In the End*, a sextet for the company's men, and the first work he would create from a seated position. Although Chaves can no longer fully realize his choreography physically, *In the End* is his strongest work in recent memory, demonstrating a sophisticated and refreshing balance between raw physicality and restraint.



The Gospel of Lovingkindness.
Photo by Michael Courier

Chicago theater in 2014

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The end of 2014 is here, but I must admit that I personally cannot offer a properly judged "Ten-Best List" for the theater year. That's because there was no way for me to have seen every single show in and around Chicago, what with 115 different venues featuring performances of more than 200 member companies that are a part of the League of Chicago Theatres.

So instead, I offer a look back at the notable productions that I was able to catch in 2014, plus some important theater news to contemplate as we step into 2015.

Striking a nerve

Don't accuse Chicago theater artists of ignoring current events. Several new or new-to-Chicago dramas generated buzz by touching upon many issues that made headlines.

Ike Holter, already a playwright to watch thanks to his acclaimed take on the Stonewall Riots in *Hit the Wall*, really spurred conversation with the world premiere of his wildly acclaimed play *Exit Strategy* for Jackalope Theatre. The drama focused on teachers, an assistant principal and a student all reacting to a final year at a fictional South Side Chicago school earmarked for closure—a very touchy subject in light of several recent forced Chicago public-school shutdowns in the previous year.

Violence on Chicago's South Side was explored in two very well-received dramas: the world premiere of *The Gospel of Lovingkindness*, by Marcus Gardley, at Victory Gardens Theater and Nambi E. Kelley's new theatrical adaptation of Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* in a co-production with Court Theatre and American Blues Theater. The latter was in particular a taut and upsetting thriller that transcended its 1939 Chicago period setting as it followed a frightened young African-American man who becomes a murderer.

Health-care costs loomed large over two dramas prominently featuring gay and lesbian characters at American Theater Company. Stephen Karam's Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Sons of the Prophet* and his world premiere drama *The Humans* both very adroitly explored issues of faith, love and attraction and the fallibility of human bodies.

Laura Marks' intimate and shocking 2013 off-Broadway drama *Bethany* made a startling Chicago debut at the Gift Theatre as it tackled one woman's desperation to survive the Great Recession amid home foreclosures, a collapsing job market and government bureaucracy.

Midsized masters

Some of the most challenging and impressive musical performances in 2014 were not found on big Broadway-sized stages. Several midsized

theater companies proved their mettle by tackling difficult shows in more compact spaces.

Who needs multimillion-dollar tilting hydraulic scenery when the Griffin Theatre can truly touch you with its masterful take on the musical *Titanic* in the smallest of three spaces at Theater Wit? And die-hard musical-theater fans should be singing the praises of Bailiwick Chicago for the bravery to tackle two Broadway flops like *Carrie: The Musical* and Michael John LaChuisa's version of *The Wild Party*. Both were seen in viscerally exciting productions.

Other top-notch intimate productions include Mercury Theater Chicago's Broadway-caliber take on *Avenue Q* and Porchlight Music Theatre's near-environmental approach to reviving *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

Big-time competition

The suburban scene for top-notch musical theater is bound to get more competitive now that the Paramount Theatre in Aurora is eli-

CRITICS' PICKS

Hellcab, Profiles Theatre, through Jan. 11. Christmas doesn't always arrive with reindeer-drawn sleighs and apparitions bearing epiphanies—sometimes the announcement can be visited on a humble Chicago taxicab driver by a late-night passenger who just might be an angel incognito. MSB

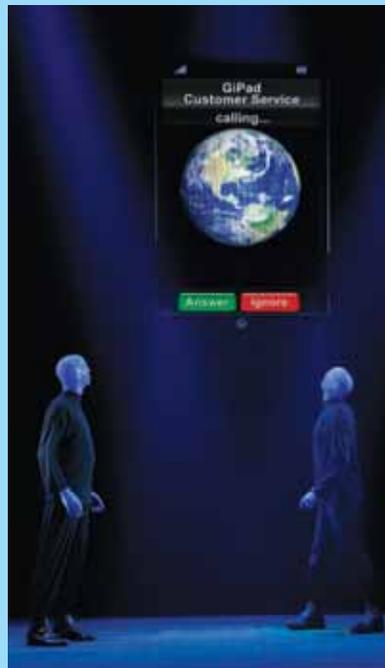
The King and I, Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, through Jan. 4. Jeff Award-winning director Nick Bowling makes a strong Marriott Theatre debut with a beautiful production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1951 Broadway classic that pits a headstrong English-language teacher against the King of Siam. SCM

Newsies, Oriental Theatre, through Jan. 4. The Tony Award-winning choreography definitely wows, but playwright Harvey Fierstein's script deserves the most praise for turning around Disney's 1992 film musical flop into a bona fide stage smash. SCM

Sherlock Holmes and the Christmas Goose, Raven Theatre, through Jan. 4. This whimsical adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's *Case of the Blue Carbuncle*, featuring the English super-sleuth, is framed in Victorian holiday carols sung and danced by London commoners. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge
and Morgan

SPOTLIGHT



Blue Man Group has been running off-Broadway since 1991 and in Chicago since 1997. After all that time you would think that audiences might tire of the mute blue-faced drummers making funny and thought-provoking performance art. But the show has been cleverly updated through the years to match with changes in technology, so there's something new to experience even if you've seen it before. Blue Man Group continues in an open run at the Briar Street Theatre, 3133 N. Halsted St. New Year's Eve performances are at 4, 7 and 10 p.m., and then at 2, 5 and 8 p.m. from Jan. 1-3. Performances are also at 1 and 4 p.m. Jan. 4. Tickets are \$67.75-\$107.75 on New Year's Eve and \$57.75-\$97.75 for other performances; call 773-348-4000 or visit www.blugman.com. Photo by Paul Kolnik

gible for the Equity Jeff Awards. The fact that the Paramount is producing shows like *Cats*, *Les Misérables* and *Mary Poppins* so soon after these musicals were seen at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire and Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace offers audiences a chance to compare and contrast the strengths of each of these venues.

The Lyric Opera of Chicago is also continuing its experiment with producing post-season musical theater with a very well-attended opera-scale production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*. But that doesn't mean the Lyric is neglecting its operatic core. Two of its best productions from 2014 included Sir David McVicar's approach to Dvorak's fairytale opera *Rusalka*, which conveyed environmental disaster and the crumbling of European monarchies on top its basic story of a water nymph who falls in love with a prince. There was also Robert Falls' dark and violent 1920s take on Mozart's serial seducer *Don Giovanni* that was full of welcome theatricality.

My kind of tryout town

Chicagoans had many opportunities to boast about seeing shows in Chicago before New York audiences. The world premiere of Sting's musical *The Last Ship* was a major event at the Bank of America Theatre this past summer, while tickets were scarce for the starry revival of Kenneth Lonergan's *This is Our Youth* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company (unfortunately both shows haven't proved to be the major draws on Broadway as they were in Chicago).

There's no word yet if the world-premiere musical *Amazing Grace* or if the Goodman Theatre's Jeff-Award-winning revival of *Brigadoon* are going beyond their Chicago berths, though the current Steppenwolf premiere of Lisa D'Amour's *Airline Highway* has already confirmed a Broadway date for April at the Manhattan Theatre Club's Samuel J. Friedman Theatre.

There's also plenty of activity for Chicago productions that are headed off-Broadway. Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's *The World of Extreme Happiness* will be hosted by Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center Stage 1 in February after this scathingly dark look at factory workers in modern-day China previously played Chicago's Goodman Theatre and London's National Theatre.

Playwrights Horizons also has two acclaimed plays that made their world premieres in Chicago on its docket. Bruce Norris' sex swinger party comedy *The Qualms*, originally seen at Steppenwolf, arrives at Playwrights Horizons starting this May, while the Thanksgiving-set drama *The Humans* by Stephen Karam will make the leap from its recent production at American Theater Company to New York next fall.

Painful losses

The Chicago theater scene was a lot poorer due to some painful losses in 2014. Evanston-based Next Theatre couldn't overcome its financial troubles and unfortunately shut down. Next Theatre was celebrated for offering the Chicago-area premiere of Larry Kramer's AIDS drama *The Normal Heart* and the world premiere of the acclaimed musical *Adding Machine*.

We also saw the loss of actors Sati Word, Trinity P. Murdock, Bernie Yvon and Molly Glynn. The latter two both died on the same day: Sept. 6.

Yvon, a Broadway veteran with numerous credits at the Marriott Theatre and Drury Lane Theatre, was killed in a car accident as he was headed to a Saturday morning rehearsal of *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* at Theatre at the Center in Munster, Ind.

And just hours earlier that same day, Glynn died from injuries suffered during a freak accident when an uprooted tree fell on her during a fast moving storm while bicycling with her husband, fellow actor Joe Foust, in Erickson Woods near Northfield the day before. Glynn had extensive theater credits in theaters ranging from Northlight Theatre in Skokie to Steppenwolf Theatre where she originated a role in the acclaimed drama *Orange Flower Water*.

Another major loss was the passing of Sheldon Patinkin, the chair of the Theater Department of Columbia College Chicago and an artistic consultant of *The Second City*, at the age of 79. Patinkin's influence was felt on generations of theater artists.



The Wild Party. Photo by Michael Brosilow

Smart moments in theater in 2014

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Even if the line of dialogue you couldn't wait to quote after Chris Hainsworth's adaptation of *Monstrous Regiment* for Lifeline Theatre was "Things couldn't get any worse if it were raining arseholes," a more accurate summary of Chicago theater in 2014 might be "*ars victrix*"—in English, "art endures."

The year may have been marked by long-existing companies folding their tents and prominent figures in the community departing—some timely, some untimely (one of the latter name-checked on a major television series barely a month later)—for that *Great Greenroom in the Sky*, but new artists opened new enterprises in new spaces to ensure that the dynamic experienced only in live performance continued beyond the brief life-spans of those whose lives were dedicated to its creation.

All said, it was a year of ups and downs, sometimes occurring almost side by side. Here are some of both:

Brainy women

THE UPSIDE: Megan Carney's *Women At War* (Rivendell) and George Brandt's *Grounded* (American Blues) broke from wholesome girl-scout and Skyping-mommy stereotypes to depict women in the U.S. Armed Forces as individuals with the same concerns as their male counterparts. **THE DOWNSIDE:** Sarah Breem's *The How and The Why* (Timeline) presented us with two top-girl scientists still preoccupied with boyfriends and babies, while Philip Dawkins' *Miss Marx* (Strawdog) reduced the daughter of the Socialist Movement to a love-sick damsel undone by an abusive cad.

Big spectacles

THE UPSIDE: Sean Graney's panoramic vision was displayed at its fullest by *All Our Tragic*, a 12-hour adaptation of all the surviving Greek Tragedies inaugurating the Hypocrites' residency at The Den. **THE DOWNSIDE:** Meteorological factors sabotaged Red Moon's riverfront Great Chicago Fire pageant and crippled several light boards during the first warm days of summer.

Filial piety

THE UPSIDE: Aaron Posner's adaptation of Chaim Potok's *My Name is Asher Lev* (Timeline) and Ena Lamont Stewart's 1947-vintage *Men Should Weep* (Griffin) made a case for children being creatures to be loved and cherished, while Samuel Hunter's *Rest* (Victory Gardens) did likewise for aged parents. **THE DOWNSIDE:** Lorelei Sturm's adaptation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (The Mill) and Caitlin Parrish's *The Downpour* (Route 66) presented us with two horrifying cases of post-partum depression, and Peter Nichols' *A Day In the Death of Joe Egg* (Stage Left) warned of marital stress associated with caring for a severely disabled child.

Smart ensemble teamwork

Foursome Dierdre O'Connell, Caroline Neff, Zoe Perry and Martha Lavey in *The Way West* (Steppenwolf); threesome Kirsten Fitzgerald, Natalie West and Mierka Girten in *Mud Blue Sky* (Red Orchid); and twosomes Darrell Cox and Lia Mortensen in *Annapurna* (Profiles) and Kareem Bandealy and Michael Patrick Thornton in *Othello* (Gift Theatre).

Smart plays

El Incas (Collectivo el Pozo), *Seminar* (Haven Theatre), *Love Tapes* (The Inconvenience), *From White Plains* (Broken Nose), *Ghost Bike* (Buzz22). **OLD-SCHOOL DRAMA:** *King Hedley II* (Congo Square), *Vieux Carré* (Raven), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Prologue), *Our Class* (Remy Bumpo). **NEW LOOKS AT CLASSICS:** Calamity West's *Doll's House Project* (In-

terrobang) and Aaron Posner's *Stupid Fucking Bird* (Sideshow). **SPECIAL OLD-TIME RELIGION DIVISION:** *Jacob* (Provision Theatre), *The Lark* (Promethean) and *Saint Joan* (ShawChicago).

Smart musical moments

Rebecca Finnegan in *Sweeney Todd* (Porchlight), beefcake Anvil Chorus in *Il Trovatore* (Lyric Opera), clever mash-ups in *Dee Snider's Rock and Roll Christmas Tale* and the ubiquity of the Vitamin String Quartet as a source of incidental music qualified as cool moments.

Smart directors

Jennifer Markowitz for *Hellish Half-Light* (Mary-Arrchie), Toma Tavares Langston for *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Enthusiasts) and Matt Hawkins for *The Arsonists* (Strawdog) are this year's honorees.

Smart tech

Check out the Thalidomide Kid painting in *Joe Egg* (Stage Left), sewing machine in In-



Darrell W. Cox in *Annapurna*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

imate Apparel (Eclipse), bicycles in *Ghost Bike* (Buzz22), fake cigarettes in *Ecstasy* (Red Orchid) and the breakaway wall in *Monstrous Regiment* (Lifeline). **SPECIAL STEAMPUNK DIVISION:** *Jane Eyre* (Lifeline), *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Promethean) **SPECIAL BOAT-IN-THE-BOTTLE DIVISION:** *A Tale of Two Cities* (Lifeline), *Crime and Punishment* (Mary-Arrchie), *Great Expectations* (Strawdog) **SPECIAL FLORA AND FAUNA DIVISION:** Brutus the fighting fish in *The Clean House* (Bluebird) and Widget the cat in *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (AstonRep)

Smart actors

Kristin E. Ellis in *The Inside* (MPAACT), Frank Nall in *The Late Henry Moss* (Artistic Home), Ron Keaton in *Churchill* (SoloChicago), Chris Walsh in *Monstrous Regiment* (Lifeline) **SPECIAL BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY DIVISION:** Linda Gillum in *Both Your Houses* (Remy Bumpo) **SPECIAL MICHAEL SHANNON STARWATCHER DIVISION:** Alex Weisman, Caroline Neff, Dan Waller **SPECIAL AARP PIN-UP DIVISION:** Dennis Newport in *Trafford Tanzi* (Prologue)

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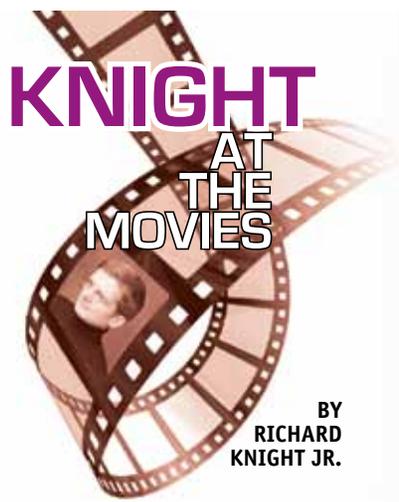
Hosted by Windy City Times
as a followup to the 2014 LGBTQ Homeless Youth Summit
with StartOut, a national organization of LGBT entrepreneurs,
Center on Halsted, Chicago's LGBTQ community center,
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BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT JR.

The 10 best LGBT movies of 2014

"The triumphs for LGBT-themed movies in 2012 echoed those of previous years and continued, by their very existence, to blur the distinctions between queer audiences and straight ones," I wrote in December of 2012 in looking back over that year's crop of movies. That blurring between gay and straight has continued with *Our People* celebrating grand triumphs on the legal, political and social fronts in the past year which in turn helped us to continue making strides in the movies and on television—not too shabby.

The year started with a bang, with a batch of excellent films that had made the rounds of 2013 LGBT film festivals getting theatrical or VOD dates, finding their way to larger audiences in the process. There were the candy-colored teen comedy *G.B.F.*; the sexy, provocative thriller *Stranger by the Lake*; the sensual yet doomed lesbian romance *Reaching for the Moon*; the offbeat, disturbing *Black Box*; the marvelously creative *Last Summer*, which artfully presented the end of first love; and the potency of love rediscovered in middle age in *Pit Stop*.

Late spring brought two of the years most buzzed-about queer movies (both from out filmmakers): the hard-hitting documentary *God Loves Uganda*, from Roger Ross Williams, debuted on PBS; and Ryan Murphy's long-awaited adaptation of Larry Kramer's play *The Normal Heart* debuted on HBO. In theaters, as the summer blockbuster season started, the pickings were, as usual, mighty slim for those looking to see either queer characters or queer-themed movies at their local Cineplex. There was yet another X-Men prequel (*X-Men: Days of Future Past*) that certainly had plenty of gay subtext; Kathy Bates practically stole the running on fumes comedy *Tammy* with her two scenes as a plain-spoken (and rather stylish) lesbian; and hunky Luke Evans headlined *Dracula Untold*—and sorta came out.

The Case Against 8, a documentary chronicle of the fight to overturn Prop 8 (once again, premiering on HBO) was a nice exception to the rule amidst the summer's usual testosterone-heavy fare. There was also a plethora of television and Internet shows that held the banner for *Our People* aloft. Once again, HBO paved the way with Andrew Haigh's new gay-themed series *Looking* (which returns Jan. 11) while Netflix brought back *Orange Is the New Black* and Amazon completely changed the game with *Transparent*, Jill Soloway's sensational trans-themed Web series (also coming back for a second season).

As fall approached and awards season began to beckon, LGBT folk and themes started showing up again in movies. Several of these—*Love Is Strange*, *The Skeleton Twins*, *Dear White People* and *The Imitation Game*, among them—were embraced by mainstream audiences, once again helping break down barriers and illuminating queer lives for our straight counterparts. And now, as we finish out 2014 and look forward to 2015 I'm thrilled to see the year starting off once again with a bang.

The Music Box has booked one of 2014's most critically acclaimed LGBT-themed movies to be-



Alfred Molina (left) and John Lithgow of *Love Is Strange*. Image courtesy of Sony Classics

gin its year (on Jan. 2). This is Daniel Ribeiro's Brazilian gay teen romance *The Way He Looks*. In the age of aggressive comedies and romances, this gentle and very sweet story of the blind-since-birth Leonardo, who is struggling to break free of the tight control of his parents and, in the process, discovers his erotic feelings—and more—for new classmate Gabriel is truly a breath of fresh air.

Here's hoping 2015 is filled with many more equally memorable LGBT-themed movies. Until then, here's my Top Ten LGBT Movies for 2014 (in preferential order). For space reasons, I'm only doing notes on the first five entries (but don't let that keep you from seeing all of them). I'd like to point out—as always—that these "Best of" lists are completely subjective. My list tends to shift around with repeat viewings and reconsiderations—as I'm sure yours does.

1. *Love Is Strange*: Out writer-director Ira Sachs returns with another gay couple drama (this one very different from his last, *Keep the Lights On*). Sachs collaborated with Mauricio Zacharias on the bittersweet story of retired artist Ben (John Lithgow) and Catholic school music teacher George (Alfred Molina), who are entering their twilight years. Together for 39 years, the couple decides to legalize the union with a marriage. (The ceremony and reception in the couple's Manhattan apartment is the charming and resonant opening sequence of the film.)

Trouble arises almost immediately when word of the marriage reaches church officials, who fire George. Without George's income, the couple have to sell the condo. In the interim, the financially strapped duo has no choice but to live apart—Ben with his nephew, wife and sullen teenage son; and Ben with close friends—gay cops who love to party. As Sachs' film brilliantly illuminates, it's one thing to preach tolerance and compassion but quite another to make it a day-to-day reality. Driven by the strong performances of Lithgow and Molina, Sachs delivers his best film to date, a bitter-sweet gem that explores a host of issues facing elders in the gay community.

2. *The Normal Heart*: Ryan Murphy—television's most audacious queer writing-directing-producing juggernaut thanks to *Nip/Tuck*, *Glee* and *American Horror Story*—made creative strides of his own in 2014 with his sterling direction of *The Normal Heart* for HBO. Author and longtime queer activist Larry Kramer adapted his searing, award-winning play that follows a group of tightly knit gay men in New York at the beginning of the AIDS plague in the early '80s. Mark Ruffalo, Julia Roberts and out actor Matt Bomer (whose performance garnered an Emmy nomination) head the cast. (Kramer is now at work on a sequel to the critically acclaimed film.)

3. *The Skeleton Twins*: Kristen Wiig and Bill Hader co-star in out writer-director Craig Johnson's tongue-in-cheek dramedy about a gay brother and his once wild but now conservative twin sister whose relationship has been frayed until a crisis helps put them back on track. The sibling relationship between Wiig and Hader—longtime cast members on *SNL* and close friends in real life—is a joy to behold (highlighted by a comedic sequence in which brother and sister bond over a Jefferson Starship song). *Modern Family*'s Ty Burrell co-stars as Hader's former lover.

Richard Blanco, August Wilson part of poetry series

Openly gay poet Richard Blanco and the late playwright August Wilson will be among those featured during Poetry Foundation's winter/spring 2015 events season.

On Thursday, Jan. 8, "Las Chavas: Poetry and Film from Honduras" will feature Blanco, the fifth inaugural poet of the United States; Brad Coley, director of the forthcoming documentary *Las Chavas*; and Cheryl Chapman, executive director of Our Little Roses, the only all-girl orphanage in Honduras.

"August Wilson: From Poet to Playwright" will take place Wed., March 25, at 7 p.m. As part of Goodman Theatre's celebration of Wilson's life and career, the Poetry Foundation will co-present a special program of his poetic writings.

The events are free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis, and will mostly take place at the Poetry Foundation, 61 W. Superior St. Visit poetryfoundation.org/programs/events.

More Madonna songs are leaked

Fourteen more songs from Madonna's upcoming album *Rebel Heart* have been reportedly leaked, according to *NewNowNext.com*. Newly revealed tracks include "Freedom," "Beautiful Scars" and the Pharrell collab "Back That Up (Do It)."

This development came just days after an earlier group of *Rebel Heart* songs appeared online, prompting the singer to release six songs officially on iTunes. She called the leaks "a form of terrorism."

The full album of *Rebel Heart*, on Interscope Records, is scheduled to be released the first week in March 2015.

4. *The Imitation Game*: Director Morten Tyldum and Chicago native Graham Moore (screenwriter and executive producer) collaborated on the story of British mathematical genius Alan Turing and his team's efforts to crack the infamous Nazi enigma code that turned the tide for the Allied forces, bringing about the end of WWII. Turing's story has been told repeatedly but this version at last reinstates his gay sexuality—a long-overdue omission rectified in this well-crafted audience pleaser that Benedict Cumberbatch's tremendous performance (as Turing) drives. Keira Knightley, Matthew Goode and a host of other top English actors co-star.

5. *Dear White People*: Out writer/director Justin Simien's whip-smart race comedy focuses on four Black students at a predominantly white (fictional) Ivy League school—Samantha, a brilliant, budding filmmaker and radio talk-show host whose refusal to accept the status quo shakes up the entire school; Coco (nee Colandrea), who is busy emulating the popular white girls; (Marque Richardson), the handsome jock and natural-born leader who is also the son of the school's no-nonsense Dean (Dennis Haysbert); and Lionel (Tyler James Williams), a geekish loner who finds himself enlisted to cover the controversy by the all-white school newspaper because of his color. It's eventually revealed that Lionel is gay—a subplot that will obviously resonate with *Our People*. Tessa Thompson and a host of other up-and-coming actors are featured.

6. *Violette*

7. *Hunted: The War Against Gays in Russia*

8. *Pride*

9. *The Case Against 8*

10. *The Dog*

Also noteworthy: *Foxcatcher*, *Regarding Susan Sontag*, *Drunktown's Finest*, *Litling*, *Tom at the Farm*, *Boy Meets Girl*

Bowie exhibit hours extended at MCA

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) has added extended holiday hours to the Bowie exhibition.

Hours are now Fridays 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sundays 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (9 a.m.-10 p.m. on Dec. 28 and Jan. 4). The exhibit ends Jan. 4.

Tickets are \$25, which includes admission to see the rest of the museum. Because the exhibition is ticketed by time, visitors need to select a date and time for a ticket to be issued. Tickets can be purchased online at www.mcachicago.org/bowie or by calling 312-397-4068 during museum hours.

OUTmusic Jan. 19; nominees announced

The 9th OUTMusic Awards will take place Monday, Jan. 19, in New York City. Orange Is the New Black actress Lea DeLaria and singer Sir Ari Gold will co-host.

Nominees have been announced. Nods for Album of the Year went to *We Will Know* (by Omar Thomas Large Ensemble), *Heartthrob* (by Tegan and Sara), *Well-Strung* (by Well-Strung), *Chapter 10* (by Charice) and *Daze of Love* (by Karmen Butler).

Single of the Year nominations went to "Forbidden Fruit" (by Toya Delazy), "I Was a Fool" (by Tegan and Sara), "The Other Side" (by Monifah), "Tell It To My Heart" (by Jason Walker featuring Bimbo Jones) and "Play My F**kn Record" (by Sir Ari Gold).

Steve Grand, a recent *Windy City Times* 30 Under 30 honoree, received a nomination for Best Rock Song for the breakthrough song "All American Boy."

Chicagoan Jess Godwin received two nods, for Best Alternative Song and Video of the Year for the song "Bleed."

See www.outmusicawards.com.

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Special content from **nightspots** **Seize the Day**

Sidetrack was the place to be on Mon., Dec. 22, for the Seize the Slipper benefit, a holiday cabaret featuring the casts of the national tours of Disney's Newsies and Cinderella, all to benefit Broadway Cares. Photos by Jerry Nunn



Pick up the current issue of Nightspots, our Best of 2014 issue. Also, see new photos each week in Windy City Times until our first issue of Nightspots for 2015, on stands Wed., Jan. 21. Also, check out Nightspots on social media:



CALENDAR

Brought to you by the combined efforts of

WINDY CITY TIMES **nightspots**

Wed., Dec. 31

Black Ensemble Theater New Year's Eve 2014 Celebration, With Love From The Black Ensemble Theater Performance Black & White New Year's The biggest and sexiest women's countdown in Boystown. Hosted by Back Lot Bash and The L Stop. Impress with your best black and white attire. Live jazz music from Zole Moser and The Ali Wyatt Sextet Band. DJs Kirby and Kristin, plus go-go dancers. \$35 VIP pre-sale ticket before Dec. 25; \$45 after. Doors open at 7. Premium hors d'oeuvres and drink package 7-9 pm. \$25 general admission bef. Dec. 25; \$35 after. 7:00pm - 2:00am Halsted's Bar and Grill 3441 N Halsted Chicago <http://halstednye2015.brownpapertickets.com/>

Bright Lights, Big Future: New Year's Eve at Sidetrack One night only, Sidetrack will be transformed with dramatic light and color. Fabulous door prizes courtesy of Ketel One Vodka. \$25 advance sale available now from your bartender or at www.sidetrackchicago.com. A portion of the door proceeds benefit the fine work of Equality IL. 8:00pm - 2:00am Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.sidetrackchicago.com>

New Year's Eve at Berlin Don't get stuck at a boring New Year's party, ring in the New Year Berlin style. DJs Greg Haus, Larissa and VoxBox. Performances by Lucy Stooles, Ben D. Mann and Fox E. Kim. Doors open at 9. Reduced cover of \$5 before 10. Champagne specials all night. 9:00pm - 4:00am Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago <http://www.berlinchicago.com>

Freak Show: New Year's Eve at Mary's Curiousities and wonders! You won't believe your eyes. Two floors of revelry to delight your senses. Appetizer buffet, midnight toast, DJ and dancing. \$15 advance tickets; \$20 at the door. 8:00pm - 2:00am Hamburger Mary's 5400 N Clark Chicago <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Resolution: New Year's Eve at Jackhammer Reflect on the year passed. Project to the year ahead. DJ Steve Henderson. Hosted by Ms. Jackhammer 2014 Chanel Exotique. No cover. Champagne toast at

midnight. Dress code strongly suggested for The Hole. Free coat/clothing check. 10:00pm - 4:00am Jackhammer 6406 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.jackhammerchicago.com>

Fire & Ice: New Year's Eve at Phoenix An elegant catered affair. \$500 balloon drop. Music by Laura B. with hot go-go boys. Champagne toast at midnight. \$25 at the door. 8:00pm - 2:00am Phoenix Bar 1932 E Higgins Rd Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 <http://www.phoenixbarchicago.com>

Moving Forward Into 2015: NYE at Progress Bar Ring in 2015 with Progress Bar. Your ticket includes hosted bar 9-11 pm, ticket for Absolut ice luge, champagne toast at midnight, complimentary coat check 9-11 pm, Progress Bar official mixtape by resident DJ Jesse Hoz for 1st 100 guest. Tickets: \$25 until Dec. 28, \$30 after Dec. 28, \$35 if purchased Dec. 31 before 7 pm. 9:00pm - 2:00am Progress Bar 3359 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/progress-bar-chicago-new-years-eve-tickets-tickets-14637957525?aff=eac2>

New Year's Karaoke Party Sing in 2015 with no cover and karaoke all night long. Drink specials and champagne toast at midnight. 9:00pm - 2:00am Shaker's on Clark, 3160 N. Clark St. <http://www.shakeronclark.com>

New Year's Eve at The Sofo Tap No cover, champagne toast at midnight, all your favorite songs and videos. \$3 Miller Lite drafts, \$5 Absolut cocktails, \$4 Fireball shots. 9:00pm - 2:00am The Sofo Tap 4923 N Clark Chicago <http://www.thesofotap.com>

Black & Blue: New Year's Eve at Touche Complimentary buffet at 9. Games, prizes and party favors. Midnight champagne toast. Blackout at midnight. \$5 tickets available at the bar. 9:00pm - 4:00am Touche 6412 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.touchechicago.com>

Stripper Bingo New Year's Eve Come in at 8 for the weekly Stripper Bingo show, followed by male dancers at 10 with your host Angelique Munro. Stick around for a champagne toast at midnight. 8:00pm - 2:00am Atmosphere Bar 5355 N Clark St

Chicago <http://www.atmospherebar.com>
New Year's Eve at Scot's Hors d'oeuvres at 8, balloon drop and champagne toast at midnight. No cover. 8:00pm - 2:00am Scot's 1829 W Montrose Ave Chicago <http://www.chicagoscotbar.com>

Thursday, Jan. 1

New Year's Day Pajama Party Wear your PJs and enjoy your first Bloody Mary of the new year. Open at 11 am. Brunch at the omelet bar begins at noon. 11:00am - 5:00pm Scot's 1829 W Montrose Ave Chicago <http://www.chicagoscotbar.com>

Senior Hot Lunch Center on Halsted is a City of Chicago Golden Diners site, where seniors age 60+ receive a hot lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon. The suggested donation for lunch is \$1.50. No pre-registration required, but we ask that you sign in for lunch before 11:30 to ensure that you receive a lunch ticket. 12:00pm - 1:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=9271>

New Year's Day Onesie Party Celebrate 1/1/15 in your onesie. Comfort and liquor! Showtunes at 4-9 pm, followed by High Energy until closing. 3:00pm - 2:00am Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.sidetrackchicago.com>

Friday, Jan. 2

Love Me Forever! Oh! Oh! Oh By gay cartoonist Jeremy Sorese, a series of illustrations, selected from The Best American Comics 2013, exploring the idea of getting married. On display in the Congress Corridor through March 8, 2015. 9:00am - 5:00am Harold Washington College 30 E. Lake St. Chicago 312-747-4050 <http://tinyurl.com/kwb5mnl>

Airline Highway A rag-tag collection of strippers, hustlers and philosophers come together to celebrate the life of an iconic burlesque performer who has requested a funeral before she dies. Through Feb. 8. \$86. 7:30pm Steppenwolf 1650 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.steppenwolf.org/Plays-Events/productions/index.aspx?id=623&performanceDate=2014-12-19T19:30:00>

Formerly Known As (FKA) Long-running Northside queer dance party moves to second Friday of each month. Welcoming space for people of all genders, representations, expressions, identities and sexualities. 10:00pm Big Chicks 5024 N Sheridan Rd Chicago <http://facebook.com/FKADANCE>



SO LONG, FAREWELL

Wed., Dec. 31

Say goodbye to 2014 by enjoying the festivities on New Year's Eve.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

Saturday, Jan. 3

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Chicago-area GLBT Chapter Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance chapter specifically founded for Chicago-area GLBT community with mood disorders or other significant psychological conditions, as well as their friends, partners, and family members. All are welcome. 11:00am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com/>

Black & Blue Bear Night With the Great Lakes Bears, Chicago's original bear party celebrates the new year at midnight with pizza and a second New Year's champagne toast and blackout. DJ Freddie Bain. 10:00pm - 5:00am Touche 6412 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.touchechicago.com>

Sunday, Jan. 4

OutChicago, LGBT radio Progressive talk with Scott Duff. Streaming live online 11:00am - 1:00pm WCPT 820 am <http://www.chicagosprogressivetalk.com/pages/pages.php?page=451>

Simply Scotty With Scott Gryder and Nick Sula every first Sunday 7:00pm 3160 Chicago's Piano & Cabaret 3160 N. Clark Chicago <http://www.3160chicago.com>

Monday, Jan. 5

QueerCast Windy City Queercast with host Amy Matheny joined weekly by guest hosts Mitchell Fain, Deb Pearce, Stephen Rader, and Colman Domingo 12:00pm <http://www.windycityqueercast.com/shows.html>

Wed., Jan. 7

Breaking Down Barriers to Health Care Get Covered Illinois (GCI), the Official Health Insurance Marketplace for Illinois residents, previews advertising with Chicago-area newlyweds Jake and Allen. Learn how the new law provides access to universal affordable health coverage. RSVP by Monday, Jan. 5 to Jillian.Zankowski@illinois.gov or by phone. 10:00am - 11:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago 312-814-2190.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Young Playwrights Festival Professional production using professional actors and directors to shine a spotlight on area emerging teen writers. Through Jan. 31 7:30pm Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago 773-878-8864. Tickets: <http://www.PegasusTheatreChicago.org>

Saturday, Jan. 10

Affinity's Burning Bowl Affirmation ceremony, an Affinity tradition for over 10 years. Theme "Soaring Forward Like a Phoenix." Speakers, drumming, performing arts, and community building and fellowship. Free event that is open to all. 5:00pm Chicago Theological Seminary, 1407 E 60th St, Chicago <http://affinity95.org/accontent/?p=3113>

Crys Matthews LIVE -- A Benefit for YEPP Matthews is a blend of Americana, folk, funk, blues and jazz. Proceeds benefit Youth Empowerment Performance Project. 6:15 - 7 VIP Dinner, meet & greet w/ Crys Matthews. 7pm doors open. 7:15pm YEPP Performance. 8pm Crys Matthews 6:00pm Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave, Evanston Tickets: <http://crysmatthewsatuce.brownpapertickets.com/>

Dyke Delicious at Chicago Filmmakers: SEX(ED): The Movie Writer and Director Brenda Goodman explores how many of us first learned about s.e.x. when we were kids. Second Saturday monthly film and video screenings for lesbians and their friends. \$10. 7 pm social hour before the movie 8:00pm Chicago Filmmakers 5243 N Clark Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/354280431416559/?source=1>

the DISH WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES

The Butcher's Tap; 'Visit Phoenix' at Farmhouse

BY ANDREW DAVIS

From a culinary standpoint, Commonwealth Tavern (which I reviewed recently) could possibly take a page or two from **The Butcher's Tap** (3553 N. Southport Ave.; <http://thebutcherstap.com/>). While the fare at Butcher's was not as elaborate as Commonwealth's, the overall execution seemed to be better.

It might seem like the last thing the Southport corridor might need is another sports bar/restaurant. However, Alex Zupancic, a general manager at The Butcher's Tap, said that his venue's pluses include "more than 80 beers on tap—and they're nicer beers" in addition to offering organic, pasture-raised meat. For Zupancic, the latter aspect is particularly meaningful, as he related to Windy City Times that it was a more healthful approach to food that turned around his own health. (There's even a lengthy book on each table about meat at The Butcher's Tap, which takes its name partially

from the fact that the site was a butcher's shop in the 1930s.)

As for the food, it's pretty impressive, overall. The blackened chicken quesadillas were good (but not great)—but the entree portion of the meal shined. I ordered something pretty simple: A Chicago-cut burger with Havarti, arugula, caramelized onions, field mushrooms and steak sauce—and it was probably one of the best burgers I've had this year. My dining companion ordered a turkey pesto sandwich, and was generally pleased. However, we both sang the praises of the mac 'n cheese—an intoxicating concoction of pasta with Parmesan and mozzarella. This dish alone is, as they say, worth the price of admission.

Unfortunately, no desserts were available—partially because the spot opened only on Dec. 4. (In a sad coincidence, dessert was slated to debut the night after we dined.) While that took away from having a well-rounded experience, it certainly didn't lessen the quality of what we did try.

By the way, there are tons of other dishes to sample here, from hand-sliced deli meats to several salads to buttermilk-marinated chicken.

A side note: The Butcher's Tap is actually two floors—and the second level, which has a



Above: From The Butcher's Tap. Photo by Ed Negron. Below: Desserts from Farmhouse. Photo by Andrew Davis



pool table and dartboards, can be a party room. However, Michigan fans be warned: This place and the decor cater to The Ohio State University followers.

'Visit Phoenix' at the Farmhouse

It was no coincidence that representatives from Arizona recently hosted a "Visit Phoenix" media reception at Farmhouse (228 W. Chicago Ave.; <http://farmhousechicago.com/>).

What better time is there to coax people to

come to the warm Southwest than in December?

Reps from Arizona Biltmore, The Wigwam, Flagstaff CVB, The Musical Instrument Museum, Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, Visit Tucson, Talking Stick Resort, Glendale CVB, Visit Mesa, Scottsdale CVB, Sedona Chamber and the City of Peoria (yes, Arizona has one, too) pitched the values of their cities/companies to journalists—but this event also provided a chance for patrons to try the fare of Farmhouse, which (as one might guess) emphasizes farm-to-table cuisine.

And what nice fare it is. Appetizers included deviled eggs and sausage-stuffed mushrooms (both pretty tasty). Attendees then dined on mixed-green salads with citrus vinaigrette, and could then choose from one of four entrees: skirt steak, brick chicken, lake trout and gnudi (a type of pasta). I chose the chicken, and was very impressed with it, as it was juicy and tasty. Other people were similarly happy with their choices, although no one around me opted for the trout, it seemed.

Lastly, there were jars of S'mores custard and cheesecake mousse for dessert. They both made impressions—but they were quite different. The cheesecake mousse won raves, but people looked confused by the custard—why would a S'mores dish have seasonal fruit jam? I'd suggest removing the jam—and I'm probably not the only one who'd recommend that.

Overall, I'd say Farmhouse rates a visit—and so does Arizona.

Chicago concerts in 2014

BY JERRY NUNN

This past year, there were so many memorable live acts that hit the local Chicago music scene. Many musicians included a Windy City stop on their tour agendas in 2014 with good reason.

Chicago is known to be a test market to gauge what music will be hot or who might be the next big thing. If you miss a performance once there's always a good chance that singer or band will be back. Windy City Times ran all over the city covering shows, sometimes more than one on the same night.

With Lollapalooza, concertgoers had to literally plan out their agendas or miss a favorite act on a different stage at the same time. Summer festivals in our town have something for everyone from rocking at Riot Fest, art pop at Pitchfork, or light dance shows in Union Park at North Coast Music Festival, which turned five years old this year. We lost Wavefront Music Festival this year but gained back Spring Awakening to appease EDM fanatics.

If concertgoers are lucky, they may discover an upcoming act before it explodes into popularity and that ticket price hits the roof. One can watch an artist move from small venues to huge arenas within mere months. This year, there were many examples of this.

Crooner Sam Smith hit The Vic in April, The Riv in September—and will return in January to the massive UIC Pavilion.

Pop princess Charli XCX was an opener for groups like Coldplay before playing intimate Schubas Tavern at the end of 2013. She moved into the larger Lincoln Hall this past October and just played the AllState Arena for the Jingle Ball concert.

Blonde bombshell Betty Who visited Chicago many times in a year with some ups and some downs. She jammed at Lincoln Hall in April, suffered bad weather and cancelled on Pridefest, rocked it at Lollapalooza, performed at an exclusive rooftop pool party, and then returned to the Windy City at the House of Blues this past October. She recently opened for Katy Perry in Australia to packed stadiums and wig-wearing teenage girls.

Speaking of teens, the gothic glam of teenager Lorde not only knocked it out of the park at the Aragon as a solo act but brought her back to town for Lollapalooza for one of the best performances that August weekend.

Rapping up in 2014, Iggy Azalea packed her "Booty" into Lollapalooza, House of Blues and AllState Arena all in the same year—and she's now flying in with a private jet.

Ones to watch are groups like Clean Bandit, which quickly outgrew Lincoln Hall the band's first time to bat, and Irish soul singer Hozier, who was at Lollapalooza and then sold out Metro. He's taking fans back to church at the Riviera Theatre in February.

Two new venues came alive this year. Concord Music Hall booked acts like La Roux and Tamar Braxton. Thalia Hall opened in Pilsen, retaining the architecture and acoustics of the original space. Mysterious Zola Jesus put on a haunting show there and partyman Andrew W.K. rings in the new year to high-priced tickets.

With the new births, historic venues like the Congress Theater were shut down due to conflicts with the city. Chicago is now requiring live singers and instruments as part of the solution to electronic music antics.

Hot spots such as City Winery have a more relaxed atmosphere where spectators may dine, drink some wine and hear a musician play up close and personal. Macy Gray, Sinead O'Connor, Lisa Fischer and Billy Bragg all brought healthy crowds to this venue in 2014.

The Bottom Lounge yielded some unique sounds with French hipster faves Yelle and fresh faced Nick Jonas brought his solo act there packing the place with sign holding teenage girls.

On the other end of the age spectrum Chicago Theatre booked class acts in 2014 such as old-school divas Diana Ross and Aretha



Diana Ross. Photo by Jerry Nunn

Franklin. Women who hit it big in '90s were also on hand. Fans witnessed Tori Amos jamming on her dueling pianos and Natalie Merchant minus the 10,000 Maniacs still singing rare tracks from albums after all these years. Merchant mentioned that cell phones were not a nuisance when her music career started!

It was good to be gay as a performer this year, with political and proud Melissa Etheridge, the unstoppable Indigo Girls and newly out Neon Trees frontman Tyler Glenn all playing multiple times in the Windy City and all interviewed by the newspaper. Big Freedia brought bounce repeatedly to the Chicago music scene—showing Miley how twerking is really done—and electronic Erasure was the queerest of the queer, thanks to Andy Bell's sequined hot pants and feminine dancing. Canadians Tegan and Sara showed you can be open about your sexuality while maintaining artistic integrity and had a radio hit with "Closer" in the process. The Vic busted to the seams with their fan base this time out.

Almost every gay in town danced outdoors to the heavy beats and grooves of Swedish singer Robyn at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion over this past summer.

Lady Gaga released the worst album of her career, but with artRAVE: The ARTPOP Ball she packed the United Center with gays. Speaking between hits, she treated her gay "monsters" with respect and appreciation, putting her mouth where her money is.

There was big support from our straight allies as well, such as Oscar and Grammy winner Jennifer Hudson at Pridefest and Lily Allen sporting rainbow clothing at The Riviera Theatre. Hey: Allen sings, "I will be your fag hag and you can be my gay." While not politically correct, what more can you ask for?

Don't pick on this pink reviewer for being too over-the-top gay because the best concert of the year had to be Cher's magnificent one-woman extravaganza. Cyndi Lauper returned to open for her once again, as she had many years before. The girls just wanted to have fun that night—and they did.

Jogging down the aisle of the Allstate Arena dressed as a prizefighter, Lauper showed that these ladies meant business. Cher asking "What's your granny doing tonight?" set the tone for a night full of humor, and spectacle. Appropriately titled Dressed to Kill, there were enough costume changes and strong vocal gymnastics to put artists half her age to shame. What better time of the year to present this show? June during Pride month, of course...

Who will be the newest live performance artist to break into the spotlight in the coming year? Stay tuned but here's a hint: Watch those opening acts, hit those festivals early and keep your ear to the speakers.

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TOP CHICAGO SPORTS STORY OF 2014

Retiring quarterback Sami Grisafe looks forward

BY ROSS FORMAN

Sami Grisafe showed up for her first practice with the Chicago Force in 2007, at Lane Tech High School. She had contacted the team via the website and completed the online questionnaire, and her bio stated that she played years of youth football and also was the quarterback for the boys' team at her California high school.

Force owner Linda Bache, also a defensive standout on the team at the time, was "intrigued" by the possibility of Grisafe joining the Force. "I was watching the door to see if I'd know who she was as she entered," Bache said.

"I saw a tall blond with long hair walk in and knew immediately that it was her. She gave off a vibe as someone who could command a huddle and inspire others. She didn't know anyone on the team, but jumped into drills and immediately engaged with everyone. Then I saw her throw ... and I knew she was the future of our franchise."

Grisafe spent eight seasons as the team's quarterback, leading the Force to a national championship in 2013 and transforming Chicago into a perennial power in women's tackle football. She also has excelled on the international stage, winning two gold medals with Team USA.

Grisafe is, arguably, the greatest quarterback in women's football history. Make that, was. Grisafe, 29, an Evanston resident, retired from the sport after the 2014 season, in which the Force was one win away from a return trip to the national championship game.

Grisafe's retirement ranks as the No. 1 moment among the Top 10 Chicago LGBT Sports Moments from 2014.

"Sami had a phenomenal career," Bache said.

"There are so many memories of Sami making beautiful throws and great plays, but I think my favorite memories of her are when she handed the ball off and ran downfield to throw blocks for our running backs. It's rare to see a quarterback blocking, but Sami took great pride in it. Usually a defense looks for opportunities to take shots at quarterbacks if they leave the pocket, but Sami was an aggressive hitter who liked to initiate contact and she usually got the best of it. I always loved the shock and disbelief on their faces when she knocked the snot out of them."

Grisafe said it was difficult to sum up her career in a few sentences, but noted it was filled with "lessons of leadership, friendship, trust, capability, glory and tons of love."

Winning the national championship in 2013 was "pretty amazing," but not necessarily her favorite on-field moment. Instead, that memory was a year earlier—at the 2012 national championship game in Pittsburgh, which Chicago lost.

"We were losing and I began to revert back to my rookie ways, albeit giving up, when one of my then-retired teammates told me, 'What are you going to do, Sam? This is on you, nobody else. You have big shoulders. I believe in you.' I will never forget that moment. It was then that I understood what it meant to be a leader," Grisafe said.

"It's been an amazing journey, and ironic. As a young girl, people told me that football would do nothing for me, but it has actually taught me the most about how to navigate through every aspect of my life. Football has taught me to overcome insecurity, fear and uncertainty with work and the humbling act of asking for help. I have learned how important the people in my life are and how very grateful I am to be standing beside them. These lessons will serve me well into the twilight of my life.

"Winning two gold medals and being

named the World MVP [was] beyond my wildest dreams. The greatest career highlight for me, though, was hearing my teammates and coaches both on the Force and Team USA tell me they believe in me, that they would go to battle with me any day. The latter is an accomplishment in character and one that I hold high above any contest."

Grisafe joined the Force during her last semester at Chicago College of Performing Arts, and she now is the singer/songwriter/chief creative officer for Vicious Muse.

Music is Grisafe's future.

"I love football and my team more than I could ever explain, but it is time to focus on my career," she said. "Performing is my other love and it's time to put the same commitment into music and acting that I did to football."

"I played football for 14 years beginning at age 10 and into my sophomore year in high school. I played eight years longer than I ever dreamed because I didn't realize that opportunities existed for women to play professional football until I heard about the Chicago Force. They are my family, always will be. The Force will remain in my heart as I continue on my journey."

And she probably will sing the national anthem before future Force games, as she has done—in uniform and gear—for years.

"It's going to be rough," when the Force season starts next spring, Grisafe said. "I've been playing this game for 14 years, nearly half of my life. Luckily, I am also in love with music and acting. I will be filling up every hour of my days working to make my other dreams happen. A rolling stone gathers no moss, but hopefully it grabs the cover of its namesake's magazine."

Grisafe was quick to offer praise to others for her football success, starting with her parents and brother, plus her coaches from her formative years. She said Bache "guided and looked out for me throughout my 20s" and tagged Bache as a mentor who "I was lucky I had."

Grisafe admitted that Force coach John Konecki "was hard on me, and I wouldn't have it any other way." She said Konecki "will always be my big brother [and he] taught me more about football than I could've ever fathomed. It was a gift to learn from you, but even more to spend time with you."

She went on to praise her teammates, all of them, plus the medical staff at Athletico, among others.

She has no football regrets. "I believe you are where you are when you are. I learned lessons from mistakes, from being young and bull-headed. Don't get me wrong, I've made tons of mistakes, but I learned from all of them. It's a sort of magic trick I play on my brain. It works for me," Grisafe said.

Grisafe was planning to retire after the 2013 season, but returned with team hopes of repeating as national champs. Instead, her 2014 campaign was "disappointing" and injury-filled. In the fourth quarter of the team's third game in 2014, Grisafe tore her ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) and meniscus. "I spent most of the season conditioning, trying to get back for playoffs, being a support system for my team and relying on them to make me feel like I could return," she said. "After months of training, I returned, but only as a fraction of myself. Not only was my body unable to do what I asked of it, my mind was slow to make decisions. I felt I let my team down and still feel pain of failure. Luckily, those women were amazing and wouldn't let me feel badly for long. That unconditional love thing, it's amazing and frankly, I am spoiled, as I will never accept any other form of love. All in all, in times of great challenge there is great reward.



Sami Grisafe. Photo courtesy of the Chicago Force

My reward was discovering how truly wonderful my Force Family is and the lesson that cutting corners never works, no matter how many years you have spent perfecting a craft."

Vicious Muse is a record label/production company that Grisafe co-founded with Kathy Kuras, and it will be releasing the first two singles from Grisafe's upcoming album, *Brand New Fairy Tale*, on Valentine's Day 2015. "We will release the album, two singles at a time, in 'chapters' throughout 2015," Grisafe said. "For the record-loving audience, think of digital 45s with an A-side and a B-side."

"The title track, 'Brand New Fairy Tale,' is a song inspired about marriage equality and at the same time carries a universal message about writing your own story, when you can't find your dreams depicted anywhere else."

She first performed "Brand New Fairy Tale" at the Illinois March for Marriage Equality.

A music video for "Brand New Fairy Tale" also will be released on Valentine's Day, and a children's book based on this equality message also is forthcoming, Grisafe said. Plus, a documentary about her life in football is upcoming.

Top 10 Chicago LGBT sports moments of 2014

BY ROSS FORMAN

Here are the top 10 local LGBT sports achievements of 2014:

1. Sami Grisafe retired from the Chicago Force after an illustrious career as the team's quarterback, highlighted by the 2013 national championship.

2. The world learned of Eric Lueshen amid the Michael Sam coming-out news. Lueshen, who lives in Chicago, told of his time as an out kicker for the University of Nebraska football team, dating back to 2003. Lueshen helped lobby the Nebraska Legislature in the spring to pass a bill that would ban job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. He was the youth ambassador for Heartland Youth Pride and the Grand Marshal for Heartland Pride, and was in Green Bay this fall when out former NFL player Esera Tuaolo sang the national anthem before a Packers game.

3. Veronica "Ro" Gazzillo (nee Soper), who was an All-Star player and then an assistant coach for the Chicago Force, died unexpectedly on Aug. 10, at her home in Evanston. She was 39. Gazzillo was a U.S. Army military police officer until she was given a Chapter 15 discharge for being lesbian. She was a union ironworker for 15 years, and was a 1993 graduate of Chicago's George Washington High School.



Chicago Gay Hockey Association's Andrew Sobotka. Photo from of the CGHA Facebook page

4. The Chicago Gay Hockey Association (CGHA) captured gold in ice hockey at Gay Games 9, the first Games gold in club history. The CGHA captured the title in the top-tiered Men's Advanced Division, which had only two teams. The Chicagoans defeated the LA Blades 5-2 in the championship game. The

CGHA has teams that play in straight adult leagues at three area rinks. The CGHA Pride Classic tournament will be held June 25-27 in Chicago.

5. Billy Bean, the former major league baseball player, was inducted into the National Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame, among its class of 2014, which also included John Amaechi, Fallon Fox and Diana Nyad, among others. Bean attended the induction ceremony, held at the Center on Halsted in Chicago's Lake View neighborhood and, shortly thereafter, was appointed MLB's first "Ambassador for Inclusion."

6. Chicago Rowing Union (CRU) captured the gold medal in the Men's Four with Coxswain race, the club's first-ever Gay Games gold. CRU also won gold in the Women's Four race, in a combined boat with member of the Pioneer Valley Pride Crew from Massachusetts. There were 12 CRU members at the Games in Cleveland and all members of the gold medal-winning team are gay.

7. Jason Collins, who had a brief stint playing for the Brooklyn Nets before officially retiring in mid-November from the NBA after 13 seasons, appeared at two major speaking events in Chicago, including the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) annual convention.

8. The Chicago Dragons competed for the prestigious Bingham Cup in Australia. The predominantly-gay rugby team also was a finalist to host the 2016 Bingham Cup, which ultimately was awarded to Nashville.

9. Jack Neilsen, the commissioner for the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) open Sunday softball division, leads the 48-team, 750-player league, which is the largest LGBT softball league in the nation. Neilsen also was re-elected to the board for the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAA), which runs the annual Gay Softball World Series. He is the lone Chicago-resident on the NAGAAA board.

10. The Windy City Rollers, the brainchild of Elizabeth "Juanna Rumbel" Gomez and Kelly "Sister Sledgehammer" Simmons, celebrated 10 years. Its first season was in 2005 at the Congress Theatre. Windy City Rollers, with such home teams as the Double Crossers and Hell's Belles, now calls the UIC Pavilion its home arena. The next home team bouts are Jan. 10. The Windy City Rollers also are a prominent national force and feature the WCR All-Stars, the city's only nationally-ranked team.

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